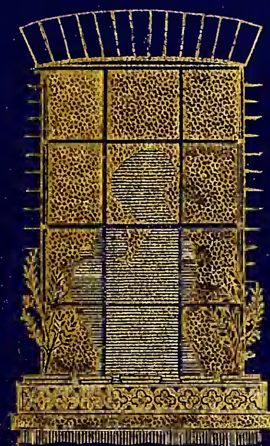

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# OTHER PEOPLE'S WINDOWS.

"The old project of a WINDOW in the bosom to render the soul of man visible is what every honest fellow has a manifold reason to wish for."—POPE'S LETTERS, Dec. 12, 1718.

"Edidi quæ potui, non ut volui, sed ut me temporis angustiæ coegerunt."—CICERO DE ORAT. Lib. iii.

# OTHER PEOPLE'S WINDOWS,

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE GENTLE LIFE."

ENGRAVED BY J. D. COOPER, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY H. P. ROBINSON.

2d

Second Edition.

LONDON:
SAMPSON LOW, SON, & MARSTON,
CROWN BUILDINGS, 188, FLEET STREET.

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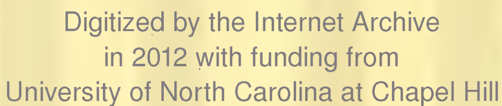
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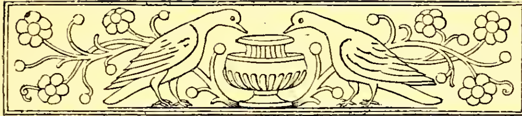

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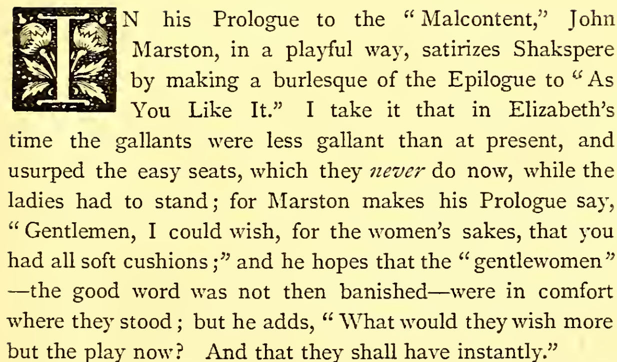
# PREFACE.



IN his Prologue to the "Malcontent," John Marston, in a playful way, satirizes Shakspere by making a burlesque of the Epilogue to "As You Like It." I take it that in Elizabeth's time the gallants were less gallant than at present, and usurped the easy seats, which they *never* do now, while the ladies had to stand; for Marston makes his Prologue say, "Gentlemen, I could wish, for the women's sakes, that you had all soft cushions;" and he hopes that the "gentlewomen" —the good word was not then banished—were in comfort where they stood; but he adds, "What would they wish more but the play now? And that they shall have instantly."

A prologue is like a preface, and hence it is cited. Few people attend to it. To those who may do so, I would urge that this book presumes to call itself original, though some of the sketches have appeared before; that it is written to amuse, and to be forgotten; that, to anticipate those who like small witticisms, it will be sure to achieve one part of its aim; and

finally, that it has been put together not without trouble, since each of the "Windows" has been visited and studied fairly and honestly. As I have not thrown any mud into my neighbours' casements, I hope that heavy stones and brick-bats will not be canted, along with the cant of criticism, through mine.

And now the play is about to begin. Gentle reader, let your judgment be tempered with good nature, and the author will be happy.

*May*, 1868.

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To the Second Edition a few explanatory words are necessary. The author has to thank the press and the public for a most generous reception of this work, and to explain that, instead of two volumes, the work is reduced to one, but the type being smaller, the compression has only required the omission of two or three of the minor and weaker chapters, by which, as a whole, the work is improved.

*December*, 1868.

# OTHER PEOPLE'S WINDOWS.

## INTRODUCTORY.

## A WINDOW IN THE SKY.

T happened, according to the learned Dr. Lempriere, who wrote in ancient days, long before the industrious William Smith had begun his never-ending but excellent compilations, or the magnanimous Anthon had determined, with Transatlantic and auctorial boldness, to plunder all the British authors he could lay finger on, that Jupiter summoned his God-council to examine a new work of his—Man.

Thus our artists at the present degenerate age—for, as we all know, all ages, when present, have been and are degenerate—summon their friends to debate, praise, criticise—but never to blame—the new picture they are about to send in to the Royal Academy Exhibition.

With all their charms, yet, as being man-created, there is something extremely earthy about the old mythologies,

although not so much so that any scholar would not regret their beauties being mauled and spoiled by the ruthless burlesque-writer; but yet, in the times when Jupiter was king, and great Pan was *not* dead, they who usurped heaven, in the wild imaginings of the poet, were so near to man himself that they might have been supposed to have spoken thus :—

"An't please your Majesty," said Neptune, with a rough voice, as if the waves and the sea-breezes had somewhat tried his kingship, "this Man of yours is a noble work, but he will never do for the sea. With the land, now, he may succeed. He can grub up the earth with those hands of his ; he can walk upon those shapely but somewhat thin legs there ; but as to living at sea, in sea, or on sea, why, a cap-full of wind would blow him to nothing, and a good sou'-wester would hurry him off the face of the waters. Avast there ! Æolus—what say you?"

The monarch of the winds submitted that Jupiter had made a pretty toy, but that he was somewhat of his captain's opinion. "Captain, or Admiral Neptune, indeed, would perhaps prefer a walrus, sea-horse, a whale, or even a shark; but he, Æolus, liked the look of the man, only he was too much like a big bird with all his feathers blown off."

"Or like a forked radish," cried Pan ; "evidently weak and feeble, and not particularly good-looking. Why had he not horns like a bull or a goat to defend himself? Of course, when he came to inhabit the earth, he must fight. He knew of a lion, which all the beasts had elected king, and a good loud roar from *him* would make Man shake on the very soles of his feet. By the way, why did he have feet like the

gods, and not armed and covered with good horn hoofs, like the bull's and the goat's ?"

"Because," said Jupiter, "this forked radish, this bird without feathers, this animal Man, *animalium Dux et Rex*, is created for a higher destiny than that of the bulls and the goats, which he, man, should offer up on grateful altars." And the king of gods and men sniffed with wide nostrils, as if the incense already rose to the blue ether, and rolled his eyes —large, blue, kingly, and eterne—with some contempt upon Pan and his friends.

Then stepped forth another of the *Dii Majorum Gentium*, with yet another by his side. They were Mars and Vulcan. Mars, whose armour clanked as he walked on the crystal pavement of Jupiter's palace, said that Man was a brave fellow of his inches, and that he would teach him to war and to fight, and that, no doubt, in the after years, he would give some account of his prowess. "Aha!" cried he, as Man's eyes sparkled at his gestures, for as yet man understood not the large utterance of the gods—"aha! my friend, we shall drill you into ranks, and form you into the phalanx, and marshal you into armies, and you shall do glorious deeds in battle, and worship me."

"Ay, ay," said Vulcan, with a short, dry cough, as one burnt up from being at the forge, and with a live spark in his throat which all the nectar he had taken had failed thoroughly to put out—"ay, ay, Mars; I will teach him something useful. You gods here are above me; you will not soil your delicate fingers by examining the riches of the earth; but I will teach Man rare secrets. He shall know where diamonds lie—whence the freshlets of water spring—where the red copper

and the pure white silver, and the yellow gold lie in countless treasures; but, chief of all, I will give him two servants—Coal and Iron; and with these he shall tame the earth, and travel the sea, and fight and subdue all your animals, Pan, weak as he is. I like your work, Jupiter—he is the last and best; and, by the way, while I am about it, I will just call my wife Venus to look at him: like the rest of her sex up here, she is fond of something new."

"Last and best," said Jupiter, with a smile; "nor quite the last, nor quite the best. He wants a companion; he must have a she-man about him, or, poor fellow! he will be miserable indeed. What say you, *Regina et Conjux?*"

"Would you spoke always so wisely, Jupiter! I, too, will gift Man, but I will wait till his partner in earth's trials, sorrows, triumphs, and joys, such as they will be, is formed. But here is Mercury, your eloquent, expert, agile, and not over-conscientious relation. Zeus hath spoken. Mercury, give your opinion." Upon this summons Hermes, son of Maia, sprang forward, delighted to have his say; for, being eloquent, quick, and active-brained, the messenger of the gods had always a burning desire to deliver his opinion. He looked upon Man with pleasure, for he desired first to steal him, as he had stolen the sword of Mars, the hammer of Vulcan, and the very sceptre of Jupiter. "Oh! Zeus," cried the god, using for the first time the Greek nomenclature, as he preferred afterwards Greek ways, and Greek trading and cheating—"you have done well. I will teach your handywork how to speak in the senate, and puzzle his clients in the forum. In later times I will dress him in a horsehair wig, and put an absurd black toga on him, and teach him to tell lies, and make the worse appear the better reason."

"Call you these valuable gifts?" said Mars, with a sneer. "You will make him a poltroon with your lying and thieving——"

"And trading," said Mercury, with a smile—"which indeed will lead him in a roundabout way to make war; and so Vulcan will have something to employ his smithy. Neptune will find him stealing along his watery kingdom on the outside, not like the whales and the sharks; and you, Mars, will have work for Deimos and Phobos, or Terror and Fear; and your gaunt sister Erys, whom future mortals will call Strife; so that on many a battle-field—ay, even on the sea—shall Man's mimic thunders be heard. Blood shall be shed in——"

"Stop!" cried Athenē, whom some call Minerva, advancing with imperial step and cold blue eyes; "I will give Man something which shall help to keep him free from such terrible folly; and this shall be Wisdom." She laid her cold hand on his forehead as she spoke, and Man held himself erect, and with proud aspiration in his eyes looked more godlike than before.

Next came forward Venus and the Graces, and gave Man Love; and Apollo, following closely upon the gracious Nine, promised to teach him Music, which would soothe, and Poetry, which would raise and elevate him, and make him sing worthily the deeds of the gods, and the noble doings of good men. And the teachings of the Sun-god, together with his promises, being expressed in a language which Man understood—for poetry is as universal as it is beautiful—so inspired him that he looked more noble than before; and the goddesses, more generous than the gods, crowded round him, and told Jove that his work was well-nigh perfect, and that if Man could only beg of the Heaven King perpetual youth, he

would be beautiful for ever. But the king of gods shook his ambrosial curls, and denied the gift; and the hopeful eyes of Man were somewhat dimmed, even in youth, with the forthcoming, ever-present shadow of death.

The praises of the goddesses set down all cavillers, and the council pronounced Jupiter's great work, Man, to be good, with one mocking exception: Momus—a kind of half-god—a fatherless god, indeed—the son of Night, a carping critic of the worst sort, content to find fault and never to *do*. "I know all about it," he said—he had just been trying to find fault with Venus, but she was too beautiful; so he descended even to her golden sandals for abuse, and said that they made too much noise for the eternal quiet of the dwellings of the gods—"I know all about it; Jupiter did not make this Man wholly; it was Vulcan who formed him out of clay, and Jupiter, who animated him, and gave him a soul, about which the poor fellow will dispute half his weary existence. Well, the creature's shaped well enough; but nothing is perfect; even Minerva's house, which was handsome externally and internally, was not made moveable." Here Athenē, the blue-eyed, looked upon the critic with a calm contempt. "Ah!" said Momus, seeing, even in that contempt, a triumph, "it is well. And this Man—let us examine him; the head and chest imperial, the port right royal, the arms muscular, the hands shapely and useful, but——"

For a moment the mocker stood dispirited, and, rubbing an obstinate and very prominent chin, confessed that Man was a fine work indeed—a very fine work. Here, again, he stopped, somewhat puzzled.

"But what? O Son of Night!" said the indignant maker; "where's he imperfect?"

"Where does he think?" asked Momus.

"In his brain," said Jove; "whence, in my case, Minerva the Wise sprang forth."

"Umph!" grunted Momus; "and where does he feel?—where does he store up his hatred, or treasure his love? I see he has eyes; they will be some indication of what is passing in his brain."

"He feels in his heart. What then?" said the king-god.

"O Jupiter, and how dull you are! Did not Neptune make a bull so stupidly, that when he wishes to toss anybody on his horns, he is obliged to hold down his head, so that he cannot see whom he attacks? and have you not done just as foolish a thing? Here you have given him a heart for love and hatred, two important feelings, especially hatred; and by all that is beautiful, you have forgotten to put a WINDOW in that breast, so that his feelings may be discovered. Verily, even the King of Gods is not wise. What shall we say, then, O Jupiter? Shall we not cut a window in Man's breast, so that we may see the workings of his heart, and that we may make it impossible for him to do wrong; for when he feels wrong, his fellows, seeing the tumult in his breast, shall cry out, as did afterwards Menander, 'Ο γὰρ Θεὸς Βλέπει σε'—'Lo! the God beholds thee!'"

Here the speech of Momus was cut short, for, as the story says, the whole council broke into derisive laughter, and Jupiter was so incensed at the mocker that he turned him out of Olympus.

"Happily, with us, the old fables, beautiful in their wisdom,

sweet in their hidden teachings, have long been overgrown by a purer, holier, nobler Faith. Pan *is* dead! as Plutarch tells, in his *De Oraculorum Defectu;*" there is a tradition that, at the hour of the Saviour's agony, a great cry of "Pan is dead!" swept across the waves in the hearing of certain mariners; and from that time the old oracles ceased. God had indeed reassumed the reins of his power, and on this, writes Elizabeth Barrett Browning, our greatest poetess, "The vain, false gods of Hellas are silent evermore;" yet she still adjures them:

> By your beauty, which confesses
> Some chief Beauty conquering you,—
> By *our* grand heroic guesses,
> Through your falsehood at the True,—
> He will weep *not* . . . . *!* earth shall roll
> Heir to each God's aureole—
> And Pan is dead.
>
> Earth outgrows the mystic fancies
> Sung beside her in her youth,
> And those débonnaire romances
> Sound but dull beside the truth.
> * * * * *
> CHRIST hath sent us down the angels,
> And the whole earth and the skies
> Are illumed by altar-candles
> Lit for blessed mysteries.
> Let us hold in Christian duty
> *Truest Truth the fairest Beauty?*
> Pan, Pan is dead.

But this fancy of Momus remains, and many of the wild stories of the gods and goddesses still linger, teaching us, in their way, beauty and love. And so it happens that the

writer wishes to take advantage of that critical, carping, rascally fellow's suggestion, and to take the reader with him to peep into OTHER PEOPLE'S WINDOWS! What shall we not see then; as we look into the hearts of men, into their houses, into their ways and manners, all over this wide country and huge city? Something truly which will touch, amuse, or improve us, no doubt. As we walk out early in the morning down pleasant Oxford Street, turning to the west, or returning eastward, when the sun lights up the healthy faces of city clerks, and the bright looks of the little work-girls who are going cheerfully to their duty, trusting, let us hope, in God's protection, and having humbly begged for their daily bread, earned by their daily toil; when the sun lights these happy faces up, and not only those, but the care-beset brows of early city gentlemen, on whom the chain of gold coins hangs somewhat heavily—there is some pleasure for the thoughtful man to see the neatness with which Messrs. Smith's, Brown's, Robinson's, Jonson's, Jones', and Green's young men are dressing their respective windows. Shall we take a walk or so, reader, and peep into these windows in the day-time, or the evening-time, or in the middle watches of the night? Truly, Momus had some scintillation of wit and judgment in his cynical proposal. Much may be learnt even from our furtive but observant glances into Other People's Windows.

# THE WINDOW WITH THE BLIND DOWN.

HERE is a window with "the blind down" over the way in our street, and for some time the maid-servants have been divided in their opinion as to whether the rich old gentleman has just died, or a poor young gentleman has just been born. There is considerable mystery about both operations ; one the gate of death, the other that of life, the entrance and the exit of the poor player who will fret his hour upon the stage, and then will be seen no more. Lord Bacon thinks one operation just as troublesome to the subject as the other. Both are mysteries, hardly to be solved by the gossips of the street; but, one of them having already been undergone, and long forgotten by us, and the other being at a wide distance from all of us, as we think, we now and then talk about them.

The mystery of the drawn blind was not long in being solved, notwithstanding the different and opposing accounts very circumstantially delivered by the milkman and the green-grocer's boy, the first of whom inclined to the end, and the other to the beginning of the long journey. A cart-and-horse conveying a quantity of tan, which was neatly spread in the

street roadway before the house, solved the question. It was a birth after all, and not a death, as any one might have foretold had he looked at the other windows, and at the white kid glove, which had before figured at some pleasant party, perhaps, with which, with an old-fashioned tenderness, the knocker had been muffled.

Our opposite neighbours are Mr. and Mrs. Felix Straightways, a young married couple, who have been bold enough to face the world on less than the proverbial three hundred a year, and who have been hitherto very happy; and the day has now come which no novelist cares to describe, ending his tale, cunning fellow, just as the lover is accepted, or the bride, blushing amidst her orange-blossoms, is given away at the altar.

There came a time when the window of the room in which Felix Straightways and his bride slept was darkened in the daytime with a blind, through which at night-time the solitary light shone, calmly, quietly, and steadfastly; but not more calmly or steadfastly than the love in the heart of Felix, which made him look up to that window and think on, and muse over, as well as pray for those within.

The first time that the light burnt the long night through, Felix, who was nervous in the extreme during the whole evening, sat down in the dining-room with the doctor. How pale he turned when the latter was called away; how he knelt and prayed, yet scarcely so much prayed as that he formed fervent wishes when he was alone; how he listened to the stealthy tread of the nurse above; and how his ear, acutely sensible, made him fancy it distinguished some cry of pain! Then he would start up, and be struck with the reflection of

his own pale face in the glass, and would mark the lines of care and anxiety which seemed in their intensity to have worn themselves already in his cheek.

At last, he heard the first sharp cry of his child, and knelt down, pressing his forehead on his hands, and praying with his whole heart for the welfare of the little being of which he was the father.

The truth is—which, being plainly enough told, the reader has, with his usual acuteness, guessed already—the truth is, Mrs. Straightways had, in fulfilling that mission which young ladies who enter convents eschew, presented her husband with a son and heir, and that the receiver of this gift was going through that strange feeling which all family men at one period of their lives experience, and the best men perhaps the most acutely.

The faint, shrill little cries were now hushed, the trampling overhead increased, and in a few moments Mr. Spatula entered the room and congratulated Felix upon being the father of "a fine boy," and detained him from rushing at once to his wife.

"But Lotty! dear Lotty!" he said—for the feeling of paternity was so strange that it found at present no resting-place in his breast—"but dear Lotty! how did she go through it?"

"Bless you!" answered the doctor, "as they all do—like a heroine. Ah, sir, it's woman's province to suffer pain; they beat us there. She had a capital time of it. But now sit down and make me a glass of grog. I shall stay here some little time; the nurse will come and tell you when you may see Mrs. Straightways."

Felix, with an intense feeling of relief, does as the good-humoured doctor bids him, and makes also a glass for himself; but he cannot drink it—he is nervous and excited. He scarcely knows what to do; but he joins in the conversation with an absent air, till Mrs. Chitterling rings the bell, and the servant enters with the message that "Nurse sends her compliments, and please, sir, you may come and see the baby."

What author is there amongst us who shall rightly describe the feelings of one who, for the first time in his life, beholds his child? What memory is there so acute that it shall jot down every thick-thronging fancy, and note every impulse? or what brain is there so cool that it shall count and analyse each pulsation of the heart? One cannot describe the indescribable. We are, at best, but weak creatures; some joys which we experience are too astounding—some griefs too sharp; they go beyond the measure of humanity, and of them time bears little record—save where, perhaps, a deadening blank occurs.

So we will let that pass, and watch Felix as he sits by the side of his wife, who holds, for the first time in her life, a little helpless thing, about to draw its life from her own bosom.

Warm and gently breathing, with a little cap of the finest muslin pressing round its silky hair, and indenting even those soft plaits into its softer flesh, lies the little one upon its mother's arm. And, as the father bends his head to gently touch it with his lips, to look upon it as a new wonder, the mother raises her eyes to his; and when they meet, husband and wife thank God for the new bond of affection which has grown up between them. The long silken lashes of the

young wife are wet with a new emotion—the deep gaze of Felix full of a more softened love than ever yet beamed from it.

All things considered, therefore, when Lotty, as she did immediately, fell asleep, clasping the little baby, and with the hand of Felix softly held within her own—fell asleep, I say, with a heart so full of calm, holy happiness—of comfort, relief, of peace, and joy, such as she had never felt before—it was hard that Mrs. Chitterling, the nurse, should turn him incontinently out of the room. "It was a great favour," she said, "to let him come in at all; some gentlemen never saw their ladies at such times; and so, sir, you must go."

"Yes, but, nurse," said Felix, miserable at being ejected, "husbands see their *wives*, surely?"

It was all one to Mrs. Chitterling. The flattery dealt out by people of her class, in dropping the good old name of wife, and in substituting that of "lady," which some people imitate in the reported marriages in the papers, Felix had attempted to satirise; but the satire fell harmless upon the ample folds which Mrs. Chitterling wrapped round her. The gentleman was therefore turned out, and Mrs. Chitterling, establishing herself in a huge invalid's chair, fell asleep by the side of her patient.

It was at this period, while the blinds were down, that Felix passed the most comfortless period of his existence. He was by no means unhappy; that adjective being not only too strong, but perfectly unfitted to express his feelings. He was comfortless.

Mrs. Chitterling reigned supreme. It was she who prepared for him his breakfast, his solitary breakfast, taking

charge of the keys of the mistress, and dealing out what tea she chose. It was she who, on the pretence that the servant had enough to do (and in truth she had, with Mrs Chitterling in the house), would persist in sending him his toast, prepared by her own hands at the fire, which she would keep in all night, and which naturally got dull and sleepy in the morning. Such toast! unhealthy yellow round the edges; but, as if to compensate for that, with a deep black patch in the centre! No wonder that he did not eat much at breakfast, and went away quite crestfallen, when, after knocking at his wife's chamber door to bid her good morning, he was answered in a cutting whisper that the "patient" was asleep. Oh! those cutting whispers! they were sharp enough, but not more sharp than Mrs. Chitterling's sarcastic coldness and evident contempt for his ignorance babyward. The first time he attempted to hold a baby was such an egregious failure on his part, so said Mrs. Chitterling, that he never tried it again in her presence. It is but justice to say that he has since "got his hand in," to use a vernacular, but not very vulgar phrase, and that, in the opinion of Mrs. Felix, who ought to be an authority, few or none can nurse a baby so well as he.

When the blinds are down for this cause in a man's house, the selfishness of the creature comes out very prominently. He goes like Felix to his business, and works with application, for he knows that he has an additional mouth to feed; but when he comes home, then the feeling of utter wretchedness commences. Where is now the bright smile, where the twinkling candles? where the warm, soft hand, held out to catch his own, which would drag him indoors

without giving him time to wipe his shoes? where the pert, happy tongue which would drive him out and scold him for not doing so? He used—this poor Felix—to stand shivering at the door, looking up to the blind with the faint light behind it, and think of these things.

He stood at the door, to be sure, much longer that heretofore. Dreary, inexplicably dreary, was his tea when he got it; and so lonely was the poor man that he formed a friendship with the cat, and grew amused and absorbed over the "Quarterly Review." The cat, like the husband, is a wanderer at such times; for nurses have cats of their own at home, and love not the strange animals. There was no interchange of kindly thoughts at tea, no gossip or harmless banter about acquaintances, in which Felix used to mix his salve rather strong, because he loved to hear his wife take the part of the innocent.

Helpless and reduced to a very small position in his house, looked at disdainfully as a somewhat useless appendage, even by the maid-servant, Felix would sometimes be tempted out to a friend's house or a concert; but he never failed to think himself guilty in going, nor, indeed, to hear of the heartlessness of some men, in a playful but cutting aside from Mrs. Chitterling. At times, when his wife was vaguely said to be "improving," he would be allowed to sit and take tea in her bedroom. But the entertainment was a failure because of the jealous Chitterling, and the utter helplessness of Lotty in such hands. If the unhappy husband tried to draw that dragon out, or to ask her opinion on the baby as upon something of which, from her great experience, she was an authority, he met with cutting rebuffs on the ignorance of all his sex, except

the doctor, and was sure to come to grief in some disastrous way, as a young husband, and a nobody. Talk about the equality of woman; in the chamber with the blinds down their supremacy is utterly established.

But now and then the pleasant time he spent with Lotty—who, though weakly, occasionally sat up, looking pretty and fresh in the fashionable cap in which young ladies at these periods delight to deck themselves—nearly compensated for the distraction he suffered under the heavy sway of Mrs. Chitterling, who indeed was only to be subdued by a much more heavily armed vessel—Lotty's own mother. When that respected lady came, Felix felt as if he should fly the house. Poor Lotty was brought to the bar of superior judgment, sat upon, and morally crushed. The baby was commiserated, and even when he slept that calm deep sleep which healthy babies, bless them! now and then indulge in, the fear and tremors of Mrs. Lotty were generally aroused by the matrons, and the young mother was supposed to be as ignorant of the management of her own child as a girl of two would be of the dressing a court doll. Weary and puzzled, Lotty would look up to Felix for relief, but gained none from his unhappy face. But when the two elder women were away, wife and husband would fall talking happily enough of that time which would shortly come, when Lotty would be quite strong and of the walks they would then take, when the baby, a very Moloch, to whom all their comfort was now sacrificed, should be asleep; and again they would talk upon the duties which had fallen to them—duties at once so new, so grateful, and yet so strange.

Then they would gossip about the time when he should grow up, and what they should do with him: how Felix would furbish up his Latin and Greek, which of course he never did; and how the mother dreaded the vices taught at schools; and how their baby-boy should be a pure, beautiful thing, as white as unsmirched snow, whom no sin should touch; and how the mother should herself be taught in teaching her boy.

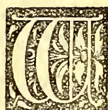
Alas! the time has come and gone, but the boy is not there; for, although Felix carried down his wife in his own strong arms with much rejoicing, it pleased God, for his own good purpose, soon to take the child; and for hours the young wife thought and thought again of the deep mysteries of Life and Death, when she saw that life she would have given so much to save drifting slowly away from her—slowly, slowly, yet sure as death. And it was during a second illness of his wife that Felix saw again the light shine through the blind; and recalls it again in after life, when he looks up in the long dismal street to some dimly-lighted window, and the past pain and sorrow return once more.

But all this has long past. Our young friends have other children round them now; sorrows have touched them but to still their hearts; advancing years have taught them that the eager joys of youth are far less precious than those calm feelings which a well-spent life enjoys in its progress to old age.

So spring comes and goes with its bright days and gay flowers, and summer with its warmth, sunshine, and sweet birds' songs. But God exhausts not his treasures in one

season of the year ; for autumn brings forth its fruits, and in winter, safely housed, we shall calmly mark the seasons we have passed, and look through hopefully unto that brighter year which will beam for all of us. Such thoughts fill the mind of Felix Straightways as, yet in the summer of his life, he remembers the troubles and trials he has passed ; and such the lesson which was taught him by the dim light shining through the blind.

## THE AUTHOR'S WINDOW.



WHILE Mrs. Chitterling established her place in the house of Felix, and, moreover, learnt to rule him through his wife with an absolute sway, it must not be supposed that his anxiety for his wife took away all appetite for his other pleasures.

On the contrary, after worrying himself all day at the Royal Inland Sealing-wax Office, in the company of a few other young gentlemen who had, some of them, the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Felix, and some of them not, away he would hurry home, in the hope of being useful, and very speedily find with a certain *un*relief that he was not so. As for dear Lotty, who had hungered all day to feast her eyes on him, when she saw his anxious face all her anxiety was banished, and she declared that she was wonderfully well, and that Mrs. Chitterling was all that could be desired. Now the nurse was by no means "all that could be desired." She was ignorant, sleepy, foolishly officious, and dreadfully fussy. As she was never quite certain what she was about, she was exceedingly quarrelsome if questioned, and nervously anxious that everybody should suppose she knew everything. All this, Lotty, with a woman's acuteness, knew; and all this

Felix saw through. And yet these little deceits, gentle hypocrisies, kindly fallacies, and exceedingly white lies, went on between husband and wife every day.

"Quite a trustworthy person, I suppose," said Felix, holding his wife's thin white hand in his, and thinking, as he looked at it, that a woman's hand never was prettier than in the sleeve of a night-dress, with the soft lace edging falling over it.

"Yes, dear; Mrs. Chatterley, who came to see me to-day, in such a love of a lace bonnet, said that I had secured a treasure."

"Umph," said Felix—"an opinion at second-hand." Then his wife pressed his hand gently, for she saw that his eye rested on the bright gold ring on the fourth finger, and that a noble fondness overspread his face.

"Umph!" repeated Lotty, archly; "oh, we get on very well, darling. Does not it look bright now?—not a scratch on it—as good as new."

"A thousand times better, a million times dearer; why, think what it has held, think what a symbol it is of the strong love between us."

"Yes, dear, go on," said Mrs. Lotty, just lifting up a corner of the coverlet and showing a soft miniature face full of sleep and happiness, but which even in its happy sleep pressed closer to its mother's breast; "go on, there's a good Felix."

That was her way. She was not an eloquent woman; perhaps no woman is when she gets love made to her; for she likes love being *made* a dozen times more than the making it. So she said "go on," and settled herself down to listen between her husband and her child, the happiest

woman in the world, nestling in her home joys as does a young bird in its downy nest.

Was it to be wondered at that Felix was silent as to Mrs. Chitterling, and eloquent as to his own feelings? So, after a few moments of calm joy, a creaking is heard on the stairs, and Mrs. C., as she described herself in the third person, entered, softly at first, and then with a gush and a rustle, delicately reassuring to an invalid. Mrs. Chitterling was of those who objected, as she said, to be "talked over," and who fancied that all her employer's occupation consisted in canvassing her noble self—a notion which seems to pervade persons of her class.

"Yes, my dear, I know you were expecting of me; my chicken, I would not be away from you one moment. It's my dooty, sir, all'us to be at my pet's side."

Thus the nurse, with many voluble expressions of loyal service, and with a watery smile spreading gradually over a flaccid face, would interrupt the happy communion of the young couple.

"Bother the woman!" thought Felix: "I don't half like her."

"Not for a moment," thought Lotty, recalling many a long hour of neglect in her husband's absence.

"I should like to send her away to-morrow if I could, only my wife seems so thoroughly pleased with her," muttered Felix, as he drew on his gloves.

"Ah! I wish he could stay with me; his company would do me more good than this spiteful gossiping old woman," thought Lotty. But a moment afterwards she reflected that this spiteful gossip was poor and old, had been employed for

years as a gossip, and had, no doubt, fitted her tongue to her customers. "If she goes away, what refuge has she but the workhouse?"

And so Mrs. Lotty was silent about nurse Chitterling, and that excellent lady delighted herself in believing that she could "get up her sleeve," and that Lotty was a good, simple, foolish thing, and Felix a mere soft spoon.

"Quite a spoon, I do assure you, Martha," said the nurse to her friend, "and as fond; oh, so fond. I hates men as are fond, I do. Always betokens weakness—softness in the upper story, I should say. But, lawks bless you! what should we do without fools? We live upon weaknesses, we do, Martha—don't us?"

"That we do," returned Martha, turning up her little finger in a way peculiar to washerwomen and cabmen, when the right hand has a glass in it—"That we do, Mrs. C., right you are;" and here she gave a wink as she swallowed down a glass of Sir Felix Booth's popular cordial: "weaknesses is very pleasant sometimes."

"Ah, I like a weakness that has plenty of strength in it, Martha. Lawks, I've known the insides of 'undreds of houses, and it stands to reason as I should recognise a fool when I sees him. As for Felix, as she calls 'im—what a queer name it is, isn't un?—he's a fool, a downright fool."

The person upon whom Mrs. Chitterling was so positive about was just then debating what to do with himself, having quietly settled that, if the nurse had not been poor and old, he would have packed her off. "I think," said he to his wife, "that I shall drop in over the way."

"Oh, do," said Lotty, brightening up: "I shall know you are there; and Mr. Carew is a great favourite of mine."

So away went Felix, thinking himself a brute to feel so pleasantly about his jaunt. But, to tell the truth, with men a man friend is the one very delightful desideratum in life besides the wife; and George Carew, late of Sidney Sussex College, was a friend that anybody might have been proud of. As he sits behind that window, let us take a peep at him and his study before Felix enters.

George Carew, born of a family which might have been once noble, but had long ago been only respectable, was the son of a London solicitor, who had the pride of the family with very few of its other good qualities. Troubled with collecting a history of the house of Carew and keeping his own above his head, old Carew of Red Lion Square lived pretty fairly as long as that square was celebrated for lawyers, and sent his son to the University, where he would have won honours if his father had there continued to keep him. But somehow, as the books and honours of the old family increased, and Carew himself increased in pride and hauteur, his clients decreased also; the square decreased in respectability, the beadle fell into a state of dilapidation, and George Carew was taken from college and placed at the solicitor's desk, just as he would have really ornamented the family of which his father was so proud.

The same difficulty which caused old Carew to take his son away from the University, prevented him from paying for his articles, which, as George said, was rather lucky than otherwise; for he did not mind the blue bag, nor the meanness, nor the dirty office which he swept out, but he hated the law.

"There are a confounded set of lawyers whom the world would do well to throttle," said George, twirling his moustache with a fierce gesture; "and the only thing I thank God for about it is, that the Gubernator was not successful. An honest lawyer—well, I won't say that exactly—but a Christian lawyer—*must* starve; it is impossible that he should succeed."

"It's *contra naturam*," said Bagsley the barrister, who usually put the finishing touch to his plain and easy Latin, by construing it—"it's against nature."

"Ah!" said George, with a slight sneer, "did you go as far as Eutropius when you were at school, Bagsley? that's a profound author."

"Admirable!" returned Bagsley, without a blush. "I remember reading him; as profound as Plato, as eloquent as Cicero——"

"And as simple as Bagsley," concluded George, with a laugh.

Mr. Bagsley, who, being a barrister, affected the society of men of letters, felt that George Carew was too much for him, but said nothing. Mr. Bagsley was of an aspiring nature, and, having had some money left him when he was the most prominent of the young men of Messrs. Snape and Trimming's, had entered himself at the bar, eaten his terms, and had not been long called. He was a clever good fellow, honest as the day; but, having mastered with difficulty a few Latin phrases, was only too anxious to show them off.

"Whether against nature or not—and I will not attempt to dispute with my learned brother—I must confess to an ignorant impatience of lawyers. Laws were made, I suppose, for universal justice, not to maintain in heartless existence

and terribly hardening education a set of men who, it must be confessed, all flourish the better the worse mankind is."

Mr. George Carew had finished this sentence when Felix Straightways, who came from over the way, entered the room.

"Here," said George, shaking his hands warmly, "is one of the best fellows in the world; and the best fate I can wish him is, that he may never have anything to do with you, or the merry men who are waiting with their cunning looks and their parchment faces to give you briefs."

"Poor George!" returned Bagsley, as he rose and bowed somewhat stiffly to Felix, "how you must have suffered, with a father a solicitor, an uncle a solicitor, and yourself partly educated for that humanising *rôle!* I declare to you, gentlemen of the jury, that it hurts my feelings to contemplate the wrongs my friend George must have suffered to entertain this lethal, that is deadly, hatred."

Having thus delivered himself, Mr. Bagsley sat down, comfortably screwing himself into an antique arm-chair, of which there were many in the study, and gazing around as he smoked his cigar, with much complacency, for he thought that his little speech was not badly wound up.

"Bagsley's sure to succeed; practice makes perfect, and he is always addressing an ideal jury."

"But other great lawyers have done it before him," said Felix.

"Umph! yes; Bagsley thanks you with his eyes. Take a weed, Felix; I've done work for to-day, and let us smoke."

He pushed his papers and desk away from him with a sigh, and sat down under a rack of pipes, throwing himself backwards in an easy chair, and filling from a very large collection a meerschaum coloured brown in the service of its master.

Over George Carew's head was a pipe-rack carved in walnut wood, bearing on its central shield the motto, "*Man is but ashes*," which looked like, but was not, a quotation from the Rev. Erskine's "Tobacco Moralised;" and above George's standing desk, at which he chiefly wrote, were two mottoes drawn on heraldic scrolls by George himself. One bore the words from Sidney, which our author said every newspaper man or writer of whatever kind should take to his soul, "*Looke in thy heart and write*," and the other, which balanced it, was of more homely and less poetical manufacture, but was no less truly useful and good; it was this: "*Don't worrit yourself*." Many a grave publisher had laughed, and thought, "Ah! what an eccentric fish is this fellow!" as they looked on George's motto. But George was not eccentric, he was straightforward, persistent, courageous, and, on the whole, a man of genius, if a man of limited genius. He was about thirty-five, and had already won a good position in a career much more arduous and uncertain than either the bar or the church; his knowledge was multifarious, his perceptions acute, his style clear, flowing, and open, and his industry so great that he made a very fair income, and maintained his widowed sister and his own two children as a gentleman should do. In the centre of his mottoes was the old crest of the Carews, surrounded by a garter bearing the motto assumed by poor old Carew of Red Lion Square, when the prosperity of the family flared up a little, to die down as quickly as it could. This was "*Nec Pluribus Impar*"—Not unequal to many, as Bagsley construed it for the benefit of Felix.

"Poor old boy! dear old dad!" said George, looking up at the demilion and the motto; "yes, that was his, and it was

true of him : he had a heart of gold; as good a man, I take it, considering his surroundings, as ever trod between earth's floor and heaven's ceiling. But, Felix, you see I am not so ambitious; there is my motto; good English:

'Patience and Faith.'

I mean to have a clock made with a line round it—a grand line, though it is my own :

'*Patience and Faith alone can conquer Time.*'"

George spoke with full appreciation of his own work; but then he was a man who knew what was good, and was irritated by a somewhat long course of neglect or spite on the part of the critics.

"Capital!" said Bagsley; "I see it at once. Time, an old cove, has dropped his sceptre, and Patience, a demure lady, is urging on Faith, a beautiful but stern demoiselle, who is hitting the old man a crack on the head with a cross."

"Exactly," answered George, "only the old fellow Time, a 'pesky old crittur,' must have a wheel, the felloes of which will form a capital place for the hours to be engraved on, and there you have the clock."

"Hanged if I wouldn't go and send the design to Dent or to Frodsham," ejaculated Bagsley.

"Of course you would; you are a barrister, and with a wig and gown on you would sell anything, even your own conscience."

"One for you. And you sell your ideas; you fellows sell cheap what is most dear, and 'make yourself a motley to the view,' as William has it somewhere."

"Ay, did he? make *himself* a motley! Why, if all the judges that ever adorned the bench were to stew down their solemn and grave charges, their weighty platitudes and ponderous nothings into one *consommé* of legal wisdom, the book would not equal one of the thirty-five plays of that immortal, really immortal, bard. I hate repeating generalities; but this I must say, that Shakspere is the immortal one, and the word well fits him."

"The idea is not a bad one," said Felix, "that of stewing down the charges. If judges 'adorn the bench,' certainly the beauty and wisdom of their solemn charges should be apparent."

"Adorn the bench!" said Carew, with a sneer; "now I hate that cut-and-dried flattery that we have—that newspaper flummery, in which a judge is praised because he is a judge, a general because he is a general, a parson because he is a parson. If it were possible to corrupt and spoil God's good men, you would do it by that means. You don't distinguish true from false, good from bad, wise from stupid. You honour the place, not the man, which is just the way at once to snuff out and kill the man. England is fast becoming a nation of dull mediocrities through that accursed system."

"Dull mediocrities!" said Felix, laughing; "and yet she can produce these."

As he said this, he pointed to a shelf of Carew's bookcases, with which three sides of the room were lined from top to bottom, which contained books, most of them neither rare nor costly, but each of which was priceless to the world, and not one of which was written by a dull mediocrity. As George had not classed them by any other rule than that of

an approximation of size, one need not wonder if the lot was miscellaneous.

There were there Southey's "Life of Wesley," Coleridge's "Table-Talk," his "Aids to Reflection" and "Notes Theological;" there were Butler's "Hudibras," Sterne's "Sermons," "Tristram Shandy," Ferrier's "Notes on Sterne," Bishop Berkeley's "Tracts," Milton's prose works, Grove's "Olio," Sir Walter Raleigh's "Remains," Oldham's "Satires," Dryden's "Miscellanies," in six volumes, Sir Thomas Browne's "Religio Medici," and a few others. Felix was quite right when he opposed these books to Carew's sweeping condemnation of dull mediocrities.

"Quite right, old fellow, quite right," said the author proudly. "It makes one's heart beat to fancy that, amongst that little lot, your obscure book may have been slipped, eh! Ah! my boy, when old Bagsley here has risen to the bench, expounded a villanous and ignorant law, grown gouty, been quizzed by the horsehair-wigged juniors, has retired my Lord Chief Baron, and died down, those books, the very life-blood and spirit of master-minds, will be doing their good work as freshly as ever."

"'Tis a noble career," said Felix, with admiration; "and you, too, are doing good work."

"Pish!" returned the author, emitting a volume of smoke. "I have worked for A., and B., and C."—here he mentioned three of the cleverest papers in England—"but I am tired of their heartless cleverness, and I work now for the people. 'Tis a noble career; but how do we use it? Look through the whole list of papers, and mark how nobly the leaders are

written ; how fairly the reviews ; how the rich are reproved and the poor lifted ; how utterly they are marked by an absence of clique ; how expediency is never preached, and glittering nonsense and sensational stuff never, never put forward in leading articles. Here, old fellow, look in that cupboard : there's a bottle of Glenlivat, and here's a glass and some cold water ; let us pour out and wash down all this ; I feel rather troubled with the smoke."

Carew's study was one of those delightful places in which one can do anything he likes. Hence it was rather too much frequented as a lounge by men who gossiped away the author's time and too often rewarded him by stealing his ideas. For George, generous, impulsive, and utterly unreticent, generally blurted out that which came uppermost.

So, while Mr. Bagsley smoked or wandered from book to book, dipping into Montaigne, Suckling, Carew, Burton, or the modern novel with the author's dedicatory words written with his own hand, or her own hand, as the case might be, Felix and George talked. "And how is the dear old lady?" asked George. "I hope you told her how glad I was that it was all over."

The "dear old lady" was Mrs. Lotty; but, then, all people whom he loved were old with George.

"She's getting on capitally, and looks prettier every day. By Jove! George, I love her more and more; I did not know that I loved her till now, when she is the mother of my child." His honest eyes blazed up into such an illumination that George Carew caught him by the hand and shook it warmly.

"God bless you, old boy, for that sight, an honest face full

of enthusiasm. Stick to that, my boy, swear by it, fight for it, die for it, but keep it for ever, that manly honest love. If ever I——"

Here the tender manly face, with its thick shade of dark hair, and its lines of thought and tenderness, grew darker, and the voice faltered and stopped. Felix saw it all: George was a widower, and something had struck upon the tender cicatrice and made the old wound bleed anew.

"Something the matter with the pipe," he said; "here, Bagsley, give me that water-cooler; essential oil is not very nice, and the worst of a meerschaum is, that it will foul."

The cloud passed away, but not the feeling; and Felix was as happily voluble as a woman, so that Bagsley, deep in a dictionary of Latin quotations, did not notice the interruption.

"What a happy fellow you are, George!" said Felix, "surrounded here with the literature that you love, working a good work, appreciated by all, invited out to great people's dwellings, made a lion of, no doubt—to be invited to the duchess of this, and my lord that, and to talk brilliant repartees, as they do in "Coningsby," or in Bulwer Lytton's—beg pardon, Lord Lytton's—best novels; I am sure——"

"No, you are not," said George, with a sad smile, shaking his locks like an old lion, and taking a puff at the unoffending pipe; "no, you're not. If the public take from Mr. Disraeli and the noble Lytton *their* ideas of an author's life, all I can say is that my experience does not coincide with theirs. An author in England is nowhere; in France or in America he is properly acknowledged. Here the common lot of an author is that he works himself out in producing

fortunes for booksellers, and a fine crop of vexation for himself."

"Nonsense!" returned Felix; "surely you must be appreciated by thousands, and have the consolation of having aided thousands by those sound, manly articles which——"

"Hold your tongue, young one," said George, sternly; "I have the consolation of having done my work; that is all, and that is all-sufficient. I have the consolation too," he added grimly, "of having my best ideas ridiculed when they are new, and adopted when they are old; I have the consolation of belonging to a profession which requires more brain-work, more conscientiousness, more moral *nerve* and muscle than either the church or the bar, and yet is without a position; the further consolation of knowing that Sir John Subchick, at the head of the Home Department, will adopt my notions on young criminals, and get so bepraised by the papers that he will inevitably get a peerage; the extra satisfaction of reading critiques, made out of my book, perverted to show the skill of the operator, and of being dismissed with a patronising kick by a boy who has not read as many chapters as I have volumes; the still further pleasure of knowing that while the author employs publishers, printers, machinists, paper-makers, and sets going a most important branch of commerce, the butterman who buys spoilt sheets of his review or novel will sooner realise a fortune, and look down on him as he passes him on his way to court with a smile of greasy satisfaction; nay, that while the speculator has been ruining and corrupting, and the author ennobling and strengthening the nation, the speculator will get made lieutenant of his county, and will

dine with the Queen, while the author will not even be recognised by the patrons of the "great and good," and all that bosh, as an existing being. There is one man now living, known to all the world as having caused money, pleasurable feelings, honesty, and virtue, in fact, to circulate here, in America, in Australia, France, nay, half over the globe; and where is he? It is true that he is rich by his own pen, and yet, much as he has been paid, he has not reaped a thousandth part of what he has sown. Well! the hereditary donkey of a Scotch or Bedfordshire manor has more apparent honour than this great man ever had."

"Bitter!" said Felix — "hallo! there's Bagsley going;" and certainly that gentleman, with an easy "Bye-bye," left the room, having noted a few choice sayings for his forensic speeches.

"Yes, good-bye — see you again soon," cried Carew. "Bitter! not half bitter, not half plain enough. And yet the press governs the world, and knows it, and the world knows it, and it dare not express an opinion. The cause of all this is cowardice on all sides. Of course in their hearts people do honour us, and know all that I have said about Mr. Dickens; but to *him* the result must look even worse than I have painted it."

"But then, I suppose," said Felix, still trying to paint Carew's picture from his own standpoint, "I suppose that you have letters, and congratulations, and——"

"Letters from unknown friends? Yes," returned George, bitterly; "begging letters, from people who want your autograph and half-a-crown for a charity; others from ladies making up books of selections, who would like to reprint

this poem or that chapter; others from people whose particular case you have described, and who beg you to be their soul's doctor in a case of conscience the parson don't, won't, can't indeed, possibly understand. I have to answer one such letter now. Here, you sit and smoke, and I'll do it; and just pray, young one, that God may put the right feeling in my heart, and the right words on my pen."

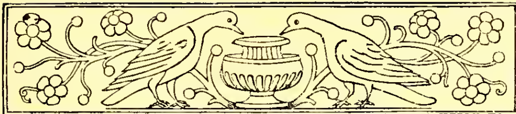
And away to his standing desk went the author, and wrote rapidly for a long time, while Felix surveyed the regiments of books, and thought of the long weary hours spent by George in that study. Not a book there but had been read and marked, not a paper but had been noted. There, too, lay the last weekly Review, with George's article, acute, honest, earnest, manly, standing out like a fine healthy, flourishing tree against a background of paper lanthorns, of flippancy, false brilliancy, and grinning folly, by writers of the pert school now so prevalent.

"I'll be ready in a minute, Felix," said George; "and then we will take a turn in the streets." And away scoured his pen over the sheets of paper. "'Twill console the poor fellow," said he, as he thrust the letter into an envelope; "and, egad, it has brightened me up in the effort. Here, you stay here while I wash."

A hurry and a rush; a plunging, as of a hippopotamus in a basin; a rough towelling and a good hard brushing, and then George emerged, with clean collar and brilliant face, ready to go out. Felix put his arm in his and left the author's study, bidding good-bye to it as an enchanted place, and muttering to himself, "Well, after all, an author, if he be a good one, is to be envied. If his—George's, that is—breast does not throb

to the sense of duty nobly done, I am a nigger. Bless you, he walks like one of the lions, and is fully satisfied with himself, I know. Of course, everybody is proud of him." Felix, as they passed out, looked up to the window with the blinds down, and, linking his arm in that of the author, said, "George, my dear boy, what are you thinking of?"

"I know what you are thinking of," said Carew; "you are thinking, young 'un, of that dear little woman up where the dim night-light shines through that blind; and I, brute that I am, am thinking just where is the best place for us to have a good song, and discuss the merits of a hot potato and a mutton chop."



# MUSIC FOR THE MILLION.

HE two young men—for George Carew was young in spirit, and, when free from labour, as gay as a bird—walked rapidly onwards, down a short hill, past the leafy embowerings of one or two villas, and soon reached the heart of the town, where the ways were dusty and worn, and the streets had that tired-out look and down-trodden appearance which they always assume in a crowded town towards the late part of the evening.

"Here we are," said George, as he threw away the end of his cigar, "in the little world of London."

"I should call it the mammoth world," said Felix; "it is bigger than great, and exhausts superlatives. Look at the swarms of people; some hurrying home with a bright smile and hopeful faces, others with a down-hearted look enough."

"Great world, if you like," returned Carew, linking his friend's arm in his, as they turned down Museum Street. "The satirist, who begins by despising all people, and ends by thoroughly hating himself, calls it *little.* It is little if you think of the snares, pitfalls, follies, crimes, flatteries, mean-nesses, masquerades, pantomimes, beads, and red Indian paint in it; great if you regard the ant-hill in clusters or in

their wondrous heaps, each ant, with its microcosm of a brain, by itself."

"Here's one ant that has not a very happy life," said Felix.

He pointed to a baker, who, with his nightcap on and his face whitened, his chest exposed to the evening air, and his cadaverous appearance made somewhat more deadly and corpselike by a green light which fell on it from a doctor's round bottle in the next shop, had crept up from his bakery and was airing hinself and looking at the crowd passing.

"That's not a very merry life," continued Felix. "How happy ought we to be! Consider the long-drawn out and linked misery of such a man."

"He's a jolly bird, I'd lay a wager," returned George, looking at him professionally, "and would make a very good character. He will enjoy himself here now till the bread rises, and sleep away some part of his existence on the very staff of life. Still I am bound to acknowledge that the stupidity of some few—chiefly, I think, dyspeptic people who live in hotels, and who will eat those scientifically unwholesome things called hot rolls—condemns this man and his fellows to a worse than Egyptian darkness, a far more cruel than an Israelitish slavery; that it shortens his existence, makes him pale, consumptive, drunken, stupid; that it allows him but one night's holiday in the week, and stews away all vigour of thought from him; and all this because some old dowagers prefer hot rolls of a morning. Else why should not the time of drawing the bread be five o'clock of the afternoon?"

"Why not, indeed!" said Felix.

"I never look on a baker," continued Carew, "but I think myself a guilty creature; and, egad, I never look through a confectioner's window but I believe myself back in the wildest part of the dark ages—if such ever existed."

"Well, society does frightfully oppress the poor fellows, certainly," added his friend.

"Yes; who ever heard of a baker turning out a genius? Was there ever a baker poet, eh?

> 'Night is the time to watch
> O'er ocean's dark expanse,
> To hail the Pleiades, or catch
> The young moon's earliest glance.'

So wrote some spooney poet. By that rule, bakers should have written wonderful things; but they never did. The fact is, we are all wrong; night may do for meditation, but the day is for work, and for that vigorous thought which precedes all work. Now we have plenty of tailors who are brave, self-reliant, and ready to fight anybody. A troop of tailor light horse, raised during a strike, and just before the Peninsular war, distinguished itself by its exceeding smartness and bravery; a set of poets have arisen from the butchers; and cobblers are notorious for the thoughtful learned men and scholars that they produce; but as for bakers, they must be relegated to the lowest rank; they produce nothing—except those idiotic confections and hot rolls."

"I do think," said Felix, laughing, "that, if you thoughtfully approach it, a wedding cake is the most senseless, barbaric, and abominable piece of work ever conceived, and I say this with a tender recollection of my own modest purchase in that way."

"You are quite right, young one," returned Carew. "Now's the day and now's the hour; everything thrives with an indignation meeting. Get up one in favour of the overworked bakers, and with the purpose of abolishing wedding cakes. How monstrous the things have grown! how like a castle, a ship, a park, or a grove of trees; a heathen temple or an Indian god-house! They have become most elaborate affairs——hallo! here we are; just let us see a little life here."

Not unwilling, under sage guidance, to see how the English people enjoyed themselves, Felix entered a place which externally looked no better than a public-house, but was blessed by having at its back a very large yard, which, having been artistically covered over by a clever architect, was made into a handsome concert-room. "Look at it," said his conductor, after having entered, "and listen to the *raison d'etre* of these places.

"The English people, the most quiet and sheep-like of all peoples, having only before their eyes the love of precedent and the determination never to do anything that was not eminently conservative, had found that places whereat a few boors assembled to sing songs were thought to be amusing. These boors, with the natural love of law which belongs to their race, had elected a chairman and had submitted themselves to his rule, and he, seated at the top of the table, was loud and authoritative, and never so happy as when he could declare 'that Mr. Smithson will oblige with a song, gentl'm'n.' Under the rule of this Tyrannos the public-house prospered, and people came from far and near to hear Mr. Smithson, until that genius and the chairman were supplied, at first gratis, and with some liberality, with grog and strong waters;

and lastly were paid, as an attraction to the house and a lure to other men to come in and spend their time and money in listening to music.

"The great law of the selection of species, as laid down by that philosophic copyist of Lord Monboddo, Darwin, has done away with Smithson and the red-nosed chairman. Smithson's voice, a very sweet one, grew rough and ragged under a long course of gin-and-bitters, and the chairman was taken in hand by Death. Now others better than they have taken their place, and the free-and-easy has become a music-hall, destined, it may be, to supplant the theatres."

"Bless me!" said Felix, opening his eyes and gazing round on the assembly.

This assembly formed a very respectable body externally, and was somewhat closely packed, for the "Great Somebody" had made a very large bid for popular favour, and "the following well-known artistes" had mustered in great force to do him a service. As the "Great Somebody," in his turn, was expected to give his time and talent to the benefit of each of the said artistes, the "Great Somebody" did not, perhaps, in the long-run, make such a good thing of his own benefit; but the hall was crammed. The adjuration, "Come early," had been obeyed, and, as there was yet some time to elapse before the curtain rose, Felix and his friend had space and leisure to observe the auditory, which occupied itself in cracking nuts and gossiping.

Perhaps a full half of the room was parted off for "reserved seats," an infraction on the "rights" of the audience which a few years ago would have created a riot, but which is now submitted to in every theatre, with a perfect appreciation of

the fact that the first thing a manager has to do is to make his house pay. That being conceded, the public seemed to be very glad to take up with the worst part of the house, and to see others, who had paid more, lounge away in the more comfortable stalls.

The "stalls" covering nearly half the hall, had each of them a table before them, with pipe-lights and spittoons in close approximation, so that the habitués could enjoy music and tobacco at the same time. The chairman, a middle-aged fellow, who looked young, notwithstanding the great wear and tear that his face must have had, was clean shaven and fairly dressed, and quite up to his business. He was surrounded by certain genial spirits, who either sang themselves, or admired those who did sing. They most of them had a fresh, half-country appearance, as if the effects of good living had had a struggle with those of late hours, and had gained a victory. They were well-dressed, and fairly behaved, although there was evidently an intimacy between them and the singers, which was quite understood by our fresh and unsophisticated Felix, when he saw the chairman leave his throne and station himself behind the footlights, in order to give a melancholy recitative, which we shall afterwards speak of.

"Hallo! Carew! Who would have thought of seeing you here? Oh, you naughty boy! And who is the young fellow you have with you? Very young cousin from Oxford, eh?"

"From Oxford Street! Why, he is the father of a family, and has come with me to study character. Just my luck: sure to meet somebody I know. Well, and how is Mrs. Scumble and the two young Scumbles, Boadicea and Caractacus?"

"Cart before the horse," returned the artist, bowing politely to Felix. "My great picture of Caractacus at Rome, crying out, when he saw the gorgeous palaces———"

"Oh, yes, we know all that. See the catalogue, *passim*, for the last century. It has been up just a hundred years, you know; and you artists have never missed giving us Caractacus, Alfred, and Boadicea."

"Well, fact was," said Scumble, with a kind of blush, "the boy, the British boy following Caractacus—for I took the liberty to lump the two anecdotes—was the most beautiful little critter in the world, and when ours came Mrs. Scumble said 'twas just like him. *Non Anglus sed Angelus*—you know the patter. Well, we christened him Caractacus and the girl Boadicea, in remembrance of having sold my big picture to an art union prize-holder from the Black Country."

"These are grateful memories. Now just sit down and pull that Guy Faux slouch hat off, if you don't want to be taken for an organ-grinder."

So saying, Carew settled himself down to do as they did at Rome—that is, at the Alma singing saloon—he called for his pipe, and he called for his pot, and fiddlers three came trooping in in no time, and presently the entertainment began.

"Beastly vulgar, isn't it, George, my boy?" said Scumble, drawing a delightful cloud out of his pipe and adjusting himself comfortably to his settee. "There's a little girl here that Madder Brown says I ought to paint: that's why I come."

"You humbug!" growled George, in high scorn; "why, it's infinitely better, and more elevating too, than Ranelagh, or Vauxhall, or the Marybone Gardens, where all the nobs went. Did you ever read the songs they sang then—eh?

Well, I have, and they have made my bronzed old cheek blush. No, but to smoke—you say. Well, does not the Grand Turk smoke when the dancing-girls come in? Is a narghilly more virtuous than a clay? or vile Rakee any better than honest Bass or Allsopp? O those motes and beams? now listen and perpend."

To a lively tune, which had the merit of interpreting the words, such as they were, and with much vivacity, a young lady, in an evening dress fashionably and well made, sang a stupid song, which, being but partially applauded, the chair made a louder noise than usual, and said Miss Belville would oblige again. In a marvellously quick time up came Miss Belville with an entire change of dress, and sang a much less stupid song about a servant-of-all-work named "Sarah," in which the attempts at gentility of a young clerk and his wife master and mistress of Sarah, were fairly satirised. The choruses, representing the continual bell-ringing and calling for Sarah, were taken up in a perfect style by the audience, and in the midst of one of these Miss Belville vanished in a torrent of applause, at the very top of which, borne faintly like the sound of a signal-gun over the roar of the waters, the chairman announced that Miss B. would "oblige again."

Felix and his friends, amused in spite of themselves, had scarce time to compare notes when the young lady appeared as a page in the time of one of the Henries—at least so she said, and no one appeared to contradict her. She was as gay as a prince in a burlesque, and sang and danced capitally and with great vigour, until, out of breath and full of excitement, she escaped again with unbounded applause, appearing a fourth time merely to bow her acknowledgments.

"That's a clever girl," said Scumble, "and a fine one too; now she'll go away to some other house and sing these songs over again, perhaps three times."

"Well, she ought to make money while the sun shines, for she is in a galloping consumption, I should say," said Felix; "perhaps, too, she is working for others."

"Yes," grumbled grim George Carew, "working for us and our friends here, to amuse us. And what is she worse, for what *we* have heard, than those great artistes who exercise their divine voices to please lords, viscounts, dukes, and the rich bankers, contractors, cheesemongers, lawyers, club-men, and rising barristers at Her Majesty's? It's only a question of degree, not of kind. The staunch old Puritan preachers swore they were all children of the devil."

"Hallo! what's here?" ejaculated Felix, as the chairman, with much the look of a mute without gloves and with no hat on, came, and, twisting his jolly face into a most unhappy expression, began singing, "Come home, father," to a plaintive and not unpleasing melody, while behind him a lime-light, projected from under the stage, threw a bright patch on the wretchedly-painted curtain, lighting up its hideousness until it was nearly unbearable by the artistic eye of Mr. Scumble. The ditty purported to be the plea of a small child to its father, to leave the public-house and to come home, for Johnny was ill and mother was waiting for him; and the recitative, solemn in rhyme and cadence, was fairly written and well given. When that finished, the curtain suddenly drew up and a thoroughly realistic tableau presented itself.

It must have been the reflection of a scene only too familiar

with dozens of the audience. A sot at a public-house, with the notices of Old Tom, a Goose Club, Billiards and Pool, and many of the low enticements familiar to the eyes of such men, maundered over his pipe and pot, while a pretty sailor-boy implored him to come home, and in an alto voice took up the recitative of the chairman; then, suddenly, another scene at the back was disclosed, and the mother and child—the child sick even to dying, and the mother pale with watching—were seen sitting in a wretched room. Still the drunken father remained, and the curtain fell. A second scene followed the chairman's second recitative, and the sick baby lay stiff and dead, laid out by the mother's hands, who knelt beside it. The picture was given with a terrible præ-Raphaelite vigour, realism, and ugliness. Anything more true it would have been impossible to see, save that the mother was cleaner than such sad mothers often are. So said Carew, who had visited many poor homes and seen the reality. A third scene followed: the brutal father endeavouring to strike the boy, but eventually coming home and falling prostrate, as the figure of the little child, in real bed-gown and false wings, rose like an angel at the back of the scene. When the curtain fell the applause was immense; wives urged their husbands to applaud, and applauded themselves; and, indeed, the audience would not rest quiet until repentant father, natty little sailor-boy, mother, and child-angel, bowed their acknowledgments before the curtain.

"Very low taste, isn't it, Scumble?" said George, satirically. "You see these poor people are not such fools after all. They teach themselves, and submit to teaching;

the man sits down to a lesson from his own life. Would fine gentlemen dare to do so at the Haymarket, or the St. James's? If a new 'Marriage *à la mode*,' a new story of *demi-monde* life, such as sensational novelists try to paint and never succeed in painting, were placed before the audience, what would they say? I do wish cant could be entirely banished. Here have I seen at music halls the vice of betting most vigorously exposed, satire administered to vanity, and such scenes as this only too often given. I maintain that, of true morality—for all these scenic representations have a moral end—these working men and women demand and have a thousand per cent. more than the *moral* middle class has. Why, super-fine sneering and superficial smartness have got so much ahead that you eschew all plays with a moral, and have not intellectual back-bone enough to sit out Shakspere!"

Felix applauded these sentiments so much that George blushed; and the chairman, fancying the noise proceeded from impatience, rang up the curtain and announced that the Great Bounce, or some one else equally great, would sing; and, after a stupid song, the great one gave certain impersonations of kings, potentates, and great men, which, to say the least, were some very clever and some indifferent. In the midst of a ri-to-tum chorus, purporting that his Majesty the Sultan "stood just so"—at which the great one popped out dressed *à la* Grand Turk, and looked, at a distance, very like the photographic potentate—our little party left, and proceeded not as they had intended, to a tavern, but to Scumble's studio, where he assured them that his colour-grinder and general slave, a gentleman who had served her Majesty as a soldier

and the regiment as batman, and a variety of artists as a model, would cook them a chop each, and boil a pot of potatoes better than any club cook in the world.

"But you've no fire," said Carew, withstanding the pressing Scumble.

"Wonderful efficacy that way in paint rags; gives a splendid taste to the chops. Come along; Belisarius will be going else."

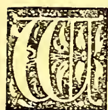
"Who is Belisarius?" asked Felix.

"My man," said Scumble. "Splendid fellow a time ago; but good living, stout, and kind treatment have spoilt him; he is too old for Aristides and too fat for Belisarius."

This our friends found when the door was opened, and the great Roman received his master with a military salute. However, the entertainment was perfect: Felix was delighted with the snug inside of the studio, and admired Scumble's new picture which he was preparing for the Royal Academy. "If I don't get made an Associate for that," said the artist, "there is no justice amongst English artists." Whereupon Carew, who was taking a deep draught from a pewter cup of an antique form, gravely winked at Belisarius, and sent that brave man into an incontrollable fit of laughter.

# IN THE STUDIO OF C. SCUMBLE, R.A.

*(in futuro.)*

ELL, young one," cried George Carew, to divert the attention of Scumble from his servitor's violent fit of laughter; "is not this a jolly place?"

Felix answered in the affirmative, and the reason why Carew winked so knowingly when he heard his friend Cimabue Scumble declare that if he were not made A.R.A. there was no justice, is lost to society. Perhaps it was because Belisarius and he had heard the remark before; perhaps some other artist, by whom Belisarius had been employed, had made the same remark in the hearing of the two. At any rate, the laugh ceased suddenly, and Cimabue was by no means disconcerted.

Felix looked round the studio and took notes. It was rather dusty, although Scumble's wife made predatory incursions into it, taking away Cimabue's money, which he kept in a tobacco jar, having the room scrubbed and the pictures wiped with a damp rag, and otherwise setting the place tidy: yet, on the whole, it was a model studio; the carpet was good,

the fire-place not wholly rusty and unconscious of black-lead, and the rag-shop of costumes not more than picturesquely shabby.

On a dais opposite Felix stood a beautiful creature of the most wooden description—nothing less than a lay figure, but posed with such a vigour, and with such fury in her glass eyes, that Felix shuddered as he looked at her.

"I'll ask Carew to tell you a story about that," said the artist. "Most wonderful old figure that; belonged originally to Hilton, R.A."

"What's she doing now, my boy—something classical?" asked Carew.

"Ye-e-s," drawled the artist, as if he had not made up his mind. "Something classical, of course. I've been at Lempriere to-day about it; it will be either '*Queen Thomyris receiving the Head of Cyrus*,' which she plunged, you will remember, in a skin bag full of blood—I shall make it a golden bowl—or, '*Fulvia about to pierce with a bodkin the tongue of Cicero*'—wonderful subjects, eh?"

"'Twill do," answered the oracle. "Look at those swords, Felix—real Andrew Ferrara that; has figured in a thousand fights on canvas. Observe those eighteenth century small-clothes; Dr. Primrose, the Vicar of Wakefield, has worn them in more than one exhibition. That armour belonged to the Black Prince in 1857, and was worn also by the Douglas when at the Suffolk Street Gallery, in 1861. That Scotch mull has been in the honoured hands of Belisarius here, when he sat for Jeannie Deans's father, and the plaid has been worn as an ornament by every British and Scotch character from Prince Vortigern to the Marquis of Montrose:

> 'A painted vest Prince Vortigern had on,
> Which from a naked Pict his grandsire won,'"

quoted the author, with mock solemnity.

"Hang it! none of your nonsense, Carew," said the artist. "Come, Belisarius, bring out the materials, and then you can go home. Mind and be early to-morrow; seven we will say; I shall rise at six."

Belisarius produced the materials from a Tudor chest elaborately carved, and silver spoons from a Morisco cabinet of wrought iron, and, having heated some water in a curious Japanese iron kettle, left the party to enjoy themselves; silently they did so; for sometimes Felix, looking at the intellectual faces of the two men, began to fancy that none in the world could be happier. "What a jolly life yours must be!" he said, "seeing your own creations grow beneath your hands; you, Carew, always ready to give your readers healthy occupation for their minds, and often noble and pure thoughts; you, Mr. Scumble, because you celebrate and perpetuate noble deeds, and are for ever striving nobly to represent the heroic. Your lives must have an elevation in them, which that of the city merchant, the mere money-grub, the solicitor, or the barrister cannot have. You——"

"What an enthusiast the young one is!" said Carew, brushing in to interrupt him. "Well, I dare say you are right. We *are* as happy as most people; should be perfectly happy but for three things."

"What are they?" asked Felix.

"Why, the first two are small and unimportant. They are simply two things: critics for authors, and the hanging com-

mittee for artists. The third concerns us both: we are men, mere men. Perhaps we do appear," continued the satirist, with mock gravity, "something more than human to the young enthusiasts in the outside public, but the fact is the same nevertheless. However, the subject is getting personal. Cimabue here is the happiest of the lot, because an artist's work, like that of an architect, is always visible and easily appreciated, and the eye of the public is generally better informed than its mind; our black and white is more difficult of recognition, and very bad artists in my way are too often very popular. However, to change the subject, let me tell you Cimabue's story, and, to make it more life-like, fancy the good fellow forty miles in the country, and that you were reading this story out of a book."

# IN THE STUDIO OF C. SCUMBLE, R.A.

*(in futuro)—continued.*

RS. CROWSFOOT," said George Carew, commencing his narration by knocking the ashes out of his pipe, "was in ecstasies of suspense—it was seldom indeed that she was in any other kind of ecstasies—but really the suspense into which she was 'thrown' equalled that of a penny-a-liner's 'neighbourhood' when a murder takes place. Neighbourhoods in which such 'coincidences' happen, and people of Mrs. Crowsfoot's temperament, are always 'thrown' into something. They never fall—they are 'thrown;' and in this instance the respectable relict of Crowsfoot, of Putney, was 'thrown' into a perfect lion's den of suspense.

"Suspense—that is the word; other people might call it repressed curiosity—the widow termed it suspense.

"The truth is, that Mrs. Crowsfoot let furnished apartments on the first, and unfurnished ditto upon her second floor. The windows of the latter (it had three) had a very pleasant and airy aspect, and also a strong north light, which was perhaps the reason that the rooms were selected by Mrs.

Crowsfoot's tenant. The first floor was let to a perfect Model, a man who always paid upon quarter-day, who never scolded the servants, who was ever at home at eight o'clock at night; and who, in return for his goodness—for these people know their value—expected the house to be kept as silent as the catacombs whilst he was at home. The Model had been allowed to have his way; he was intensely selfish; and, as the rooms suited him very well, he stayed, and his landlady quoted him, wondered at, and praised him.

"The second floor occupant, at the time I refer to, had been in Mrs. Crowsfoot's house but one quarter, and had paid, when he came, for two in advance. He had furnished his rooms himself—he had them cleaned by his own hand, or, at least, one of them, and never allowed either his landlady or her servant to enter his front room. To his bed-chamber, indeed, they were welcome to come and go; but the adjoining room, wherein he spent most of his time, was a sanctuary hitherto unprofaned. Hence Mrs. Crowsfoot's suspense.

"You suggest the keyhole. That had flashed into Mrs. Crowsfoot's mind at an early stage of the process—minute observations had been made through it. The widow was as practised as an artilleryman, and could take flying eye-shots at any angle with a precision that showed that she was an adept at the art; but there was something in *that* room which puzzled her beyond everything. There, in a chair, not far from the door, sat, night and day—for she had seen her—a female, beauteous in form, with a profusion of light brown hair, calm, and apparently in grief, bent forward and weeping—she had heard her sob and sigh, quietly, but deeply. Sometimes she was standing, and some-

times she reclined. Mrs. Crowsfoot could see so far; *once*, indeed, when her lodger had gone for a walk, the widow had caught sight of a very beautiful face; but the knock of the mysterious man who had paid for that Blue Beard chamber frightened the observer away.

"One thing was certain, the incarcerated lady *never left the house*—nay, never stirred from that room; and Mrs. Crowsfoot was ready to swear, before any magistrate, that she had never legally entered it. Not that Mr. Cimabue Scumble, her mysterious friend, did not have visitors; of these, it may be said that they formed part of Mrs. Crowsfoot's 'suspense;' and that lady objected to them strongly; but of what use was that, when two quarters' rent in advance had been demanded and paid? These visitors were such queer people: two of them (the men) were foreigners; the one, a huge fellow with a short cropped republican head, and flowing beard and moustache; the other, a fair man, of less tremendous proportions, but whose light beard and hair were equally foreign, and, to her, repulsive. He was a German—'And,' said the landlady, 'what good ever came from Germany, except Prince Albert and the broom-girls?'

"Then the ladies, generally pretty, but with such a curious confident air; so loose in their gait and dress, without the slightest appearance of stays about them. Mrs. Crowsfoot was a perfect enthusiast for stays, and declared that the people who did not wear them could not possibly be or any good in the community. The way in which these ladies and gentlemen walked in and out of Mr. Scumble's sacred apartment, and stayed there for so long a time without having any refreshment excepting pots of half-and-half,

offended the landlady; there was something very wrong in the society which could tolerate such ways. And, gracious goodness!—no, you will not believe it—the widow looked through the keyhole of the door, upon one day, and saw—— but I am not at liberty to write it. What she saw, or whom, shall be a secret for ever.

"It may have occurred in your experience, that your landlady has made you a depository of her secrets. So was it now with Mr. Cittichap, of the first floor, who was intrusted with the accumulated and still accumulating mystery. There had been, within two weeks of the arrival of the mysterious lodger, a packing-case, just large enough to hold a human body, brought to the house; it was heavy, very heavy, and at the top pierced with holes. Mrs. Crowsfoot did not hesitate to call these holes breathing holes, and hinted—indeed, went much further than hinting—that in that packing-chest the victim of her second floor lodger arrived. Poor creature! What things are done in London! Here, within the heart of the metropolis, with policemen round and about her, was a tragedy going on, as deep as was that of the Iron Mask —a mystery as impenetrable as the identification of King Charles' executioner, or as that of the writer of 'Junius' Letters.'

"Besides this, the lodger would persist in half-closing his windows all day. The shutters were half shut, so as to admit light only from the top; nay, sometimes two out of the three were closed altogether, so as, in a manner, to baffle his landlady, who thereon made friends with the opposite neighbour and borrowed an opera glass to peep into them. 'Lor bless me!' said the opposite neighbour; 'I know what he is: he's

a hartist.' 'A hartist?' said Mrs. Crowsfoot, 'he's no hartist. I had one lived with me before, and *he* used to have lords and ladies visit him in coaches; and used to paint wonderful; and, oh! such beautiful ladies they were; such 'eds of 'air, and such dresses; and then he had great men come in uniforms to be painted, and Scumble has none o' them. Oh, he's no hartist, you may rely upon it, mem.' And the opposite neighbour owned that, in this particular, Mrs. Crowsfoot was right.

"Beside this window-closing, there was a screen in the room, which, being frequently drawn across the doorway, completely shut out any peeping. Sometimes it was more completely drawn round than at others; sometimes, but seldom, it was closed. What could he want with a screen? Was he a forger, and the wretched woman his wife? Was he a gambler, or a villain who had run away with some lady, who lived with him in dread and shame, apart from all?

"'Oh, sir, what shall I do?' said the lady, in distress, to Mr. Cittichap; 'my house is becoming a "Mystery of London."'

"'Get rid of him as quietly as possible,' was the answer; 'do not make a row over it; if the house is at all likely to be exposed through it, I must leave you, I must really;' and the lodger glanced round his comfortable room, to every corner of which he had got used, with quite an air of distress. 'By the way,' said he, 'have you corresponded with her? Is there no way of doing so?'

"The widow had thought of it before—there was only one way, and that had been tried. She had, upon two occasions, poked letters under the door, couched in general terms, which

she had hoped would have reached the prisoner, but they did not produce any result.

"The truth is, about these letters, that they had fallen into the hands of the very person against whom they were written, and the lady, for whose advantage they were intended, had never read them. In fact, Mr. Scumble himself had been seen coming down stairs one morning, reading a note, in a female hand, to this effect—

"'UNFORTUNATE STRANGER,—Friends are at hand. They will relieve you. Communicate with us. If paper be denied you, use linen, or a plate. Trust in us. We can take measures for your immediate release from the perils which surround you. When unobserved, knock three times with the poker against the fourth scroll of the paper from the mantel-shelf. All will be well.

"'Yours, &c.,

"'A FRIEND IN NEED.

"Alas! each letter must in succession have fallen into Scumble's hands, for he was heard, in a satirically jocular way, to accuse his accomplices (the visitors aforenamed) of having written them, and of having dropped them in his chamber. It was when these visitors came, that Mrs. Crowsfoot tried to peep into the room, but a large screen was drawn before the door, which served effectually to block out any introvision as regards the chamber. And then the very windows were always blinded, the upper half of the shutters alone being left open, so as to shed a little light down upon the dark doings of Scumble.

"Under these circumstances, the landlady, setting all per-

sonal interest afar from her, determined to penetrate into the mystery, or to part with her lodger. She would do this quietly—she would have no noise, but do it she would; she could live in suspense no longer.

"Mrs. Crowsfoot was polite to all her lodgers—it was her rule of life, of which she never repented, and by which she had once acquired a legacy. But people who are always polite are, somehow or another, generally the rudest people in creation. Nothing can be more insulting than a sarcastic politeness, and Mrs. Crowsfoot had achieved a manner which cut one to the bone, as sharply, certainly, and suddenly as a Javan kris. It was with this weapon upon the tip of her practised tongue, together with the defensive armour of a new silk gown and a widow's cap, that she hoped to attack and rout Mr. Scumble. She waited for him for a whole hour before he arose, and heard him whistling, splashing, puffing, and blowing in his shower bath, and hissing, as he rubbed himself dry, as if he were an hostler rubbing down a horse. 'A great vulgar fellow! and to serve my house as he has done!' said his landlady to herself. 'I'll give him notice this very day, that I will, and get him out by the quarter-day.'

"The unconscious Scumble next went to work with two hair-brushes upon his bushy black hair, and the enemy outside heard the 'rasp, rasp' of bristle against bristle for some time. Then came a silence: the mysterious lodger was adjusting and tying his cravat. Mrs. Crowsfoot, bursting with impatience, listened and waited, and waited and listened.

"At length boots were pulled on, the walking coat put on —a very loose affair which buttoned to the chin and let the great Scumble beard (celebrated and well known in Frith

Street) fall upon the breast; then a felt sombrero was tossed upon the head, and the manly stride of the lodger advanced to the chamber-door. He was in great glee, for he whistled, and sang, and chuckled, and said to himself, once or twice, that he thought it would 'do.' His landlady caught the words. 'Oh, you're a nice gentleman, you are!' she said. 'Do! yes, I think it will do. I'll do for you, and no mistake.'

"Nevertheless, her determination rather retired apace, when Scumble, walking, as Speed hath it, 'like one of the lions,' opened the door suddenly, and looked her full in the face. Her nefarious practice of peeping had rendered her guilty as to her feelings, and she felt that she might not be able to answer very well how she obtained this mighty secret. 'Truth,' said the widow, 'stands upon four legs—a lie upon one; therefore, I'll out with it—I will, at once—I'll speak out, I will—yes, that I will.'

"She had retreated up four stairs when her lodger came out, so as to appear casually passing, and she had, therefore, to overtake him as he descended. She caught him just by the door of the quiet lodger; that individual had begun his first egg.

"'Oh! Mr. Scumble, sir,' cried the lady, in the most frigidly polite tones.

"'Ma'am,' said the individual addressed, taking off his hat and bowing, 'ma'am, what is it?'

"'I want to speak to you, sir,' said the widow, severely; 'I am grieved that you should have used my house as you have used it; and I came, sir, to say that I give you warning.'

"'Warning!' said Scumble, innocently; 'what do you warn me of?'

"'Oh, you—— Sir,' answered the landlady, giving herself a severe check, 'I give you notice to quit my house for ever. To think that I should ever be subject to what I have; that my house should be mentioned in the papers!'

"'In the what, ma'am?' said Scumble. 'What is all this about? Take care, woman, what you impute to me.'

"'Woman!' shrieked the widow; 'woman! and this to me! Here, Mrs. Dander! Mrs. Dander!'

"Now Mrs. Dander was a worn-out old housekeeper, who served Mrs. Crowsfoot as servant; but that did not prevent the model lodger, who loved a row, from relinquishing his second egg, and popping upon the combatants with a vile pun.

"'Egad, sir,' said Mr. Cittichap—'egad, sir,' and he nodded at Mr. Scumble, 'you must have insulted this lady very intensely to have fetched her Dander up so early.'

"Mr. Scumble was standing with his face to Mrs. Crowsfoot, his eyes opened wide, and his nostrils dilated rather more with excitement than anger. His landlady, on the contrary, with her lips tightly closed, was pressing one hand upon her side and leaning with the other upon the balusters, her breath getting fast and short, and her whole figure swollen with rage. Mrs. Dander, in the meantime, was waddling upstairs, puffing and blowing under the exertion; for it was the peculiarity of this excellent creature's life, that she was daily being killed by 'them stairs.' Once upon level ground, and she was equal to anything; but 'them stairs killed her.'

"'Dander,' cried her mistress, addressing her by her surname as if she were an actress—and it is to be remarked that

amongst the gentler sex only actresses, young ladies educated at the Academy of Music, and milliners, dispense with the prefix, and talk to each other as we men do——'Dander, I appeal to you; what did you see in this man's room—in *my* room, in *my* house?'

"Dander was at her last gasp, and, although adjured, for that reason remained silent.

"'Now, pray be composed, ma'am,' said Cittichap, in a conciliatory tone; 'and Mr. Secondfloor—I really don't know your name—what is all this about, sir?'

"'What the deuce have you to do with it?' cried the astonished Scumble; 'perhaps you will be kind enough to be silent and shut up.'

"Cittichap shrank backwards, alarmed at the fierce looks of Scumble; and the landlady, turning to him with the sweetest smile, said—

"'Thank you, sir; I am sure I expected such behaviour from so proper a gentleman; do not interfere—he might also behave as a ruffian. No words, sir; don't speak to me'—this was addressed to Scumble.

"'Now, Mrs. Dander, *what* did you see in this person's room?'

"'You,' gasped Dander, with her hand on her side—'you see it as well.'

"'I know I did,' replied the landlady, majestically.

"'Through the keyhole,' added Dander; 'and you had a cold in your eye and the brow-ague for a fortnight afterwards.'

"'Well, woman,' interposed Mr. Cittichap from behind his landlady, 'well, what was it?'

"'A woman,' said Dander.

"'Good gracious!' said Cittichap, 'you don't say that?'

"'I do,' said Mrs. Crowsfoot; 'I say more; and I say that for more than two months—yes, for ten weeks and for three days—that poor creature has been incarcerated in that ruffian's room, and has never stirred out!'

"'A monster!' said the model lodger. 'Why don't you call the police, and have his room searched?'

"'I will, sir; thank you, sir, I will,' said the widow. 'And now, sir, was I not right in forbidding this person my house?'

"The face of Scumble wore a grim smile; a savage look of satisfaction lighted up his face, and his eyes had even a merry twinkle in them; such was his coolness and audacity. He advanced towards Mr. Cittichap, and said—

"'A monster, am I? you shall pay for this.'

"'Police!' shouted Cittichap.

"'Don't, sir, don't,' cried Mrs. Crowsfoot; 'never mind him. Don't expose the house; it will get it into the papers. Now, Dander, what else did you see? Stand between him and the stairs, so that he don't run away.'

"'I shall not attempt, ma'am,' said Cimabue, with the strange smile alluded to still upon his face; and he leant against the wall composedly.

"'I see,' said Dander, in answer to her mistress, 'a lot of his friends, as he had got me to get porter for, all arranging theirselves and a-stretching theirselves, and a-busting theirselves; and every one on 'em was stripped to the waisteys, and they was a making *poses plasticks* of themselves all around of this unfortunate young lady as was still and mute with sorrow.'

"'There, sir!' said the widow, with a triumphant and appealing look to Mr. Cittichap, 'there, sir! what do you think of that?'

"The model lodger turned up his eyes, shut his teeth, and, after the manner of Mr. Charles Kean, muttered, 'Beast!'

"'What did you say, sir?' shouted Scumble; 'what?' And he sprang towards him; but Mrs. Crowsfoot forestalled him, and defended her lodger by falling in a fainting condition into the latter's arms.

"'I'm your man, sir,' cried Cittichap; 'but I am at present engaged with this lady;' and then he shouted 'Police!' with all his might.

"'Ay, we will have the police,' said Scumble, coolly. 'Dander, run and fetch one.'

"'No, don't: don't leave us,' said the Firstfloor, in an alarmed tone.

"'I shall not touch you,' returned Cimabue. 'Fetch one, Mrs. Dander, at once.'

"The old woman did as she was bidden, and X 24 walked in shortly afterwards. In the meantime, Mrs. Crowsfoot had revived, and had said, in a faint voice, holding still tightly to the collar of her model lodger, 'Ah, sir, he had some reason for never letting me into his room; but to think of my house—of our house—coming to this;' and she squeezed Cittichap tightly.

"'Woman!' said Scumble, 'I *had* reason, which shall soon appear.'

"'It shall; indeed it shall, monster,' returned the landlady, again comfortably crumpling her widow's cap against Mr. Cittichap's cheek.

"'Now, then,' said the policeman, who approached the group with the gasping Dander—'now, then, who is the householder here, and what am I wanted for?'

"'To search my room, if you please,' said Scumble. 'I have something nefarious concealed, so my landlady says; you will perhaps, therefore, all walk this way.'

"So saying, he led the assembled people upstairs. The policeman, with an important step, followed him; next came Mrs. Crowsfoot, supported by her model lodger; and the excellent Dander, still out of breath, brought up the rear.

"It was remarkable that, during this short transit, the guilty Scumble still wore upon his bearded face the same impenetrable smile. He opened the door coolly and deliberately, and the whole *cortége* passed in. The room was bare, without a carpet, and certainly scarcely furnished. Upon an immense easel in the centre of the room stood a large historical picture, just finished; the paint was yet wet, and luckily no dust had settled upon it. A moveable dais, with a tent-like structure of red baize upon it, stood in the corner, and upon that, lying on her face, was stretched, in white garments, the victim of Cimabue Scumble, upon whom he had practised his nefarious designs.

"Mrs. Crowsfoot gave a shriek of horror, and cried, 'We are too late! too late!' which was answered only by a hoarse roar of laughter from Scumble, when, after raising the victim, she let it drop stiffly to the ground, with the cry of '*Good gracious, it's only a dummy!*'

"'There,' said Cimabue, 'the murder is out. That figure is my lay figure. I have been long engaged upon this picture, and I did *not* think it necessary to tell my landlady

about it; and also, I *did* think it requisite to shut my door closely, and not to let these women kick up a dust here. Now, Mrs. What's-your-name, what have you to say to this?'

"The widow was nonplussed. 'I—beg—your pardon,' she said. 'I hope, sir, you won't——'

"Scumble did not let her finish the sentence, but turned to Cittichap. 'And now, sir,' said he, 'what have you to say to calling me a "beast" and a "monster"?'

"'Why, a-hem,' said that gentleman, 'that I was only defending a lady; and you know, sir, that—a-hem——. I'd better go and finish my breakfast; my third egg is as cold as a stone.'

"'Don't go, sir—don't leave us yet,' said Mrs. Crowsfoot, faintly, 'assist me down stairs.'

"'With pleasure, ma'am,' replied the model. 'And you, Mrs. Dander,' said he, turning on her fiercely, since he could not visit his wrath elsewhere, 'why did you mislead us, too, with your *poses plastiques* and——'

"'There they are, sir,' said the artist, pointing with pride to a group of half-naked Britons. 'We painters are obliged to have models, and don't generally, as people suppose, get it all "out of our own heads."'

"The group, policeman and all, turned to the magnificent production, which hath subsequently adorned the walls of the Academy, and expressed their approbation in terms more warm than judicious; so warm, that Cimabue, quite appeased, declared that he was about to send the picture off that very day, and that he would forget and forgive all if Mr. Cittichap would give a dinner in the very room as an apology. He then put a shilling into the policeman's hand, and ran down

stairs to get a van to move his work of art; and thus escaped the infliction of further apologies.

"Mr. Cittichap did give a dinner; and it was at that repast that I first learnt the story, being invited thereto by Cimabue; and was witness also of the offer of the model lodger's hand, he being in his cups at the time, to Mrs. Crowsfoot, who now owns that limb, without, indeed, the heart of the model.

"Of the picture, what shall be said? perhaps I had better read the notice of the 'Kit-Cat Journal' upon it. Scumble has got it here in his scrapbook.

"'*Boadicea haranguing the Iceni* (No. 404). *Cimabue Scumble.* The artist has here come out in full force. The injured British Queen, with her two daughters seated at her knees, is making an impassioned speech to the assembled Britons. A Roman prisoner, with steadfast look and raven beard, contrasts forcibly with the fair-haired and yellow-bearded aborigines of this favoured isle; whilst the fair daughters of the Queen, the one in wild, and the other in passive grief, cannot fail to arrest the attention of the spectator. The costume is correct, the grouping excellent, and the drawing fine. Scumble is an adept at anatomy; each figure is a study. We may object to the handling, which is too massive; and also to the flesh of the Britons, which is a little too pink; but, upon the whole, it is a national picture worthily painted. We predict great things from Scumble.'

"So said the critique. Has Scumble done great things?" asked George Carew, looking with a smile at Felix, who had been absorbed in the story. "Well, perhaps not. He has not fulfilled his promise; but how many a blossom upon the early summer fruit trees, fair, beauteous, sound, and excellent

in promise, will bring forth but sorry fruit; how little of that fruit will ripen, how much fall by untimely frosts; and, of that which ripens, how little will give forth seed to the world, which shall grow up for our children's uses into noble trees! Scumble did not fulfil his promise, perhaps; who amongst us does? but he did do this: he stayed for many years with Mr. and Mrs. Cittichap (late Crowsfoot), and that lady and Mrs. Dander have been often heard to say 'that they never had a better friend than the MYSTERIOUS LODGER.'"

## FELIX SITS FOR HIS PORTRAIT.

FTER our friends had laughed heartily at Mr. Scumble's early adventures, and the artist himself had remonstrated in strong terms on the "chaff" with which Carew had interspersed his narration, Felix, feeling for his latchkey, shook hands with his new friend and declared that he would seek his home.

"Very good," returned the author; "as I live near you I'll go with you. This fellow is a regular nightbird. He is up at all hours of the night, and I'm sure does no good to himself."

"Not so sure of that," returned Cimabue; "however, good night now. I shall be very happy to see you, sir," he said to Felix—for he was a very simple respectful man, this little somewhat shabby genius—"and if you will come some of these days I'll paint your portrait in return for your sitting; for I like your face."

Felix blushed, but did not feel at all angry with the good artist. "I'll come," said he; "Mrs. Straightways would be delighted, I am sure, with my picture done by such an eminent hand. My holidays come on shortly, and, unfor-

tunately for my wife, I can't exchange them. The head of our room is a terrible old boor, and as despotic as the Grand Turk."

"Well, we'll help you to spend them, old boy," said George Carew. "I've been working too hard lately, and I mean to 'walk around,' as they say in America. A lovely country that, Cimabue! Why don't you rush over there and find out how art flourishes? Good night."

"Good night," returned the painter, seeing his friends to the door; then, lighting a fresh pipe, he sat down to read Sir Joshua Reynolds' Discourses, and, having paid a fresh tribute to the genius of that great man, went to bed to dream of his art, and of the Prince of Wales visiting his studio, and graciously stooping to pick up his maulstick. He was full of romance and love for his art, and never for a moment thought of anything but that art. His life was therefore a happy one. Can a lawyer say so much? Does a divine, absorbed in theology or the active duties of his office, revert in his day and night dreams so frequently and so happily to his duties? Scumble thought of his art day and night; he never saw a pretty child but he fancied how well it would suit such and such a picture; no lady fell into a graceful attitude but Cimabue marked it, if he were present, and wished that, like Hogarth, he could take home a reminiscence of it on his thumb-nail. He was as constant a watcher of the heavens as an astrologer, but it was to mark the cloud-beauties of the sky; he was learned in the cirrus and the nimbus, and would tell anyone who was with him what colours should be mixed to produce such and such an effect. He had — not unwisely, as some people

affected to think—married one of his models; and the lady, who perfectly understood him, and worshipped him and his art, used to look out fine faces for him, which, had she been richer and more highly born and connected, she would perhaps have failed to do.

"Cim," she would say, "I've found you *such* a beautiful Briton, all flaxen hair, and such blue eyes, Cim! oh, they *are* lovely, they are!"

"Have you?" he would say, for a fine face put him in a good humour for all the day. "Where is it? Is it male or female, Bella?"

"Oh, it's a girl, Cim, at a fur-shop in Oxford Street. 'Law bless me, miss!' thought I as she showed me some chinchillas, 'shouldn't I like to take you home in a cab, and pull off that muslin gown and wrap you up in those skins for my husband to paint!' You must get her, my dear; you must. Such a lovely skin she's got——"

"Bella, you're a trump; you shall have the skin for a tippet and cuffs."

"I mean *her* skin, Cim," returned Bella; "it's lovely, all red and white; and a perfect glow of beauty on the cheek—none of your Madame Rachel's abominations."

And so this good creature did manage to get the young lady, whose face created quite a sensation when seen in one of Scumble's pictures in Suffolk Street. Bella was never a bit jealous, and, to tell the truth, looked out as often for a handsome male model as for one of the other sex. "When found make a note of," was her motto; and perhaps it is to this generous behaviour of hers, that Scumble owes that reputation for freshness and variety which he has acquired.

As Felix found Mrs. Lotty progressing very nicely with the baby, and as, too, his chief insisted upon some one of the office who could be relied on taking his holiday at once, so that an efficient representative should be found for her Majesty's Inland Sealing-wax Office during the chief's absence, it fell out that for three weeks or a month Felix Straightways had his own time very much on his hands.

"I shall not go out of town, Lotty," said he—determining in his mind that he would get Scumble to paint his portrait, and present it in a glorious gold frame to his wife, as a reward for well-doing, and a surprise when he should first carry her downstairs.

"Oh, my dear," said the little wife, "you must be pining for fresh air, I am sure. Take a run down to the South Coast now."

"Pining!" returned the husband, exhibiting his browned and manly face; "do I look like it? No, my dear, I am going to visit Carew and some friends he has introduced me to, and we are going to take our amusement by visiting the suburbs, and Greenwich, and the Zoological Gardens, and——"

Not a word about Scumble's promise did he say.

"Are all Mr. Carew's friends literary men?" asked Lotty, somewhat dejectedly.

"No; some of them are artists, and, I can tell you, wonderfully clever fellows too. Then, too, Carew is going to take a holiday with me; you know his time is his own."

"How nice!" said Lotty; "but, my dear"—here she looked ruefully and put out her white hand to him—"but, my dear, are not these literary men and these artists terribly wild

fellows? You know what they say in society, and what my aunt, Lady Sanguine, said, who was once a great admirer of Doctor Lardner, you know, and you know, Felix, that the Doctor ran—"

"Bother Lady Sanguine, Lotty! what good did she ever do to us except give us—or you—those splay-footed, antique, wretched *ormolu* candlesticks for a wedding present? My dear Lotty, Carew is a noble fellow, fond of his children, fond of the memory of his wife. I declare I am ashamed of the way in which the world treats authors. It is ever ready to believe everything that is bad of them; ever ready to learn from their books, and yet to ignore the teachers. For shame! for shame! Why, Lotty, those very teachers must be hypocrites, or else, as they give us such true and noble thoughts, they *must* be noble men."

"Dear Felix," said his wife, perfectly convinced, "I will believe your Mr. Carew is the noblest and the best of them; I am sure he must be good to like you, my dear, and no doubt he gives up plenty of grand offers of friendship and loads of invitations to great people. Lady Sanguine, you know, was specially fond of having an author at her feasts. Don't you remember how she trotted out that great genius Mr. Simperly, M.P., who had made some wonderful translations from the Runic which the *Quarterly* noticed? Well, you may go; and every evening, dear, when you come home—you must not be out late, you know—you shall come home and tell me what you have seen."

So the thing was settled, and Felix, in great triumph, told George—blushing as he said it—how he had defended the authors.

"Ho! ho!" laughed grim Carew, rubbing his unshaven beard with the back of his hand, and sticking his MSS. together; "that's just what many think, and she, poor little lamb, accepts the reflex of the world's opinions for her own. Loads of invitations—eh, sure! that's about as true as our wickedness."

"Ay; but, Carew," said Felix, tapping the mantleshelf and the looking-glass, in the side of which were sticking invitations to this learned society, to that exhibition, or to view this piece of presentation plate which the great silversmiths Burnish and Frost were making, "what do you say to these?"

"Ah! Felix, my boy, you will learn in time that a man is not loved for himself, but for his place. I get these things because people know that I am connected with the press, and they want a notice. Write 'Value received' on every one of those, even on Mrs. Sherringford's grand ball there. Has not Dickens shown you what Mrs. Leo Hunter was? Is not 'Leo,' the Latin for 'Lion,' and are not *nous autres* in some sense lions?"

Felix opened his eyes, not so much at the words as at the bitter tone of the author.

"Umph!" said George, after he had thus declared his creed. "I am not going to say any more. I shall make you just as selfish as myself. I am getting terribly so, old fellow. What should a boy of twenty-two summers, like you, know of the sentiments of a used-up old party like myself? The man of forty does not see things exactly in the same bright light as the youth of twenty," and the author hummed the tune of a song of Béranger's :—

> 'Leste et joyeux je montais six étages,
> Dans un grenier, quand j'étais à vingt années.'

Come along, I suppose you are going over to Scumble's; and I can tell you he's waiting for you. He's never satisfied when he has seen a fine face until he has painted it; and, young one, your 'mug' is worth remembering."

Felix put his arm through that of the broad-shouldered author, and went out, nothing loath, to the painter's. They found Scumble up and doing. That eminent man found that the long and leggy designs now so prevalent in art paid him as well as the more ambitious works which he gave to canvas; and Belisarius, without whom Scumble was nothing, turned his glittering eyes round to the two friends as they entered and saluted them with a familiar grin. He did nothing less; for the Roman general was attired in a country costume—an old brown shooting-jacket of Scumble's, a pair of leather spatter-dashes, and from a crooked stick over his shoulder depended a bundle in a handkerchief, while in his waist-belt was stuck a reaping-hook. The warrior was making a great stride forward, and stood with rigid muscles and set figure as stiff as a post.

"Ah, I see," said Carew, nodding; "making use of the old hoss again."

"Yes," returned Scumble; "for one of those stupid, creamy, silly, moral stories in 'Cantwell's Magazine.' Of course we must be 'goody,' and therefore there is no incident. How, now, is a fellow to illustrate a number in which the only lively sentence is this—really the only sentence with motion in it—'*Took his way over the fields to a distant farm*'? You perceive Belisarius is going to a distant farm; and a capital farmer he makes. That will do; I'll give you another turn in the evening. Boxley the woodcutter—engraver he calls himself—will be sending for the block to-morrow."

"Capital magazine, Cantwell's?" asked Felix, who was a simple soul.

Then it was that George Carew made one of the most clever pantomimic faces ever seen, expressive of sudden sea-sickness; so expressive, indeed, that Belisarius and his master both burst out into a loud roar.

"As good as other magazines, p'raps," said Carew. "Pays a lot of men for their names and starts fair; falls into the respectable silly groove at last; objects to its love being made too strong, and takes care to be always moral; is fond of small essays by clergymen which show that good people never starve, and by implication that all they who are well to do and in comfortable circumstances are good people. Do you see that? They publish—those people—a kind of tea-table philosophy, and 'go in' for what will sell."

"Ought we not to be very happy to think that what is good and harmless *will* sell?" asked Felix.

"Good and harmless," sneered Carew; "I demur to both adjectives. That which is untrue can never be either good or harmless."

"Bravo, Boanerges! I quite agree with you; but in the meantime I make a livelihood in illustrating tea-table literature."

"Ah! you are a base lot," said the author, laughing, but rather bitterly than heartily; "but, my poor fellow, if we authors and artists only knew our own power, how we might help on the glorious times that are to come? The publisher does not sell the book; it is what you and I give the public that sells the book; and if we would only be true to ourselves we could reform the world."

"And a pretty reform we should make of it," said Felix, "seeing that we ourselves *are* the world."

"Ah, there's something in that, too," returned the author. "I tell you what it is, Straightways—you must be one of us: you are too clever for ordinary society."

Felix, in the meantime, had been looking over the studio, and saw beauties in it by daylight that he missed by gaslight. The lay figure, of which so terrible a story was told, looked, it is true, less lifelike, and the general accessories more shabby and dingy, but on the whole the studio was improved by its shabbiness, while the light brought into being a thousand beauties in the artist's sketches, begun and not finished, which lay about in profusion; for, with that love of creation which underlies every true artist, Mr. Cimabue Scumble had expended much genius in a most prodigious number of sketches, each of which had promised to be the most beautiful ever done, and each in its turn had been laid aside with some degree of disappointment.

At present Scumble was busily engaged with Belisarius in placing a Louis Quatorze chair on an estrade ready for Felix, and preparing the light so that he could present a fair subject tor the painter. A fine kitcat size canvas, fresh and as yet unspoiled, as Carew said, was being placed on the easel ready fo receive our hero's face.

"Hallo!" cried Felix, at last; "here's a sad little story here; what is it?"

"Oh, that," said Scumble, squeezing out some paint from a tube—"Oh, that—well, it has a long story connected with it, and if you will sit down in that chair I will tell it you."

"A little lame boy in a mourning cloak and weepers stand-

ing near a shabby old man. Why, I could make a story out of that myself," said Carew.

"Ah! I dare say you could," returned the artist; "but truth is strange—stranger than fiction, as you did *not* say. How proud you would have been to have been quoted all over England like the noble bard!"

"Bother the noble bard! let us come to the story. Sit, cousin Felix; sit, good cousin Straightways. Will that do, Scumble? What a wonderful thing art is, is it not? Well, if the divine Urbino himself would transmit my mug to posterity, I should think the matter dear at the price, the pains and the penalties of sitting for it."

"A little to the right; chin not so much elevated. Now don't look as if you were Ajax defying the lightning, but as if you were simply yourself—an honest, middle-class English gentleman, and a good fellow, as you know you are. Ah! that gives you more confidence: don't laugh, please. Look over at Carew, there, and mark how carefully he fills his pipe. He always smokes after breakfast to compose his thoughts: that is why his leaders are so respectably heavy. Quite ready now? Belisarius, prepare some pale ale, bottled, and biscuits, behind that screen; and now, while you have that interested look——"

"Catch, ere she fall, the Cynthia of this minute,"

quoted Carew, cleverly sending a ring of smoke up to the rafters of the studio.

"I will tell you the story of the sketch that interested you; following the lead of our master in letters there, I will tell my tale as if it were out of a book."

## THE SEXTON'S WINDOW.

"WHY a sexton," said Scumble, mixing some colours on his palette, and gazing intently into the face of his sitter, as he commenced his story, "should exist in a town wherein he is allowed to bury no man it is not for us to inquire. Suffice it that he so exists; that his bell, with its little black wooden handle, hangs by a jointed bit of rusty wire just outside his window; and in the porch of a church, around which roars by day and night, now loud, now faint, now stirred to a wild frenzy, and then settling down to an indistinct and sullen noise, the ceaseless traffic of London. At some distance from the porch which leads to it is a tall, four-spired bell-tower, wherein hangs one of the most solemn bells in the world, to the sound of which, as it strikes eight in the mornings, sunny, or clouded with fog, or whitened by the thick-falling snow, some hundreds of human beings have been brought out to die; and once upon a time, if not now, the sexton had to toll the passing bell for the poor wretches who, from the high scaffold, could see the grey stones of the church, the graveyard with its patch of green, and the clinging ivy which has crept up the walls and covered

the spaces between the windows; nay, in casting their eyes up to heaven as they passed out of the low door of the chief prison of the ancient city of which I am speaking, the condemned ones might have seen the heavens around the four spires of the church, which rears itself above the sexton's window, and have noted, with a glance quick as the lightning's flash, that the four vanes on the steeple-top pointed four different ways; 'yea,' says Howel the traveller, 'like unreasonable people hard to reconcile, who never looked all four upon one point of the heavens.'

"The little window looks upon a faded churchyard, on which the rain has fairly had its play, and, undisturbed by the sweet winds of heaven, has beaten the very life and soul out of the earth and the green things upon the earth, and formed nothing but splashed cups of soft mud. But a few trees, worthy of a better place, such as a paradise in soft Devonian wood or on breezy Sussex down, struggle to add verdure to God's acre, though it be in a smoky city, and man's dead lie unheeded and forgotten with the roar of human seas around them. Trees are affected by artificial light, and, a good old gardener tells us, die for want of sleep. Do they ever want to go out of town? Do they not dream, as they murmur in the hot summer air, of soft virgin mould and country showers? Do they not sigh to shed, as do our town plane-trees, their sooty bark, and wrap themselves in green soft moss, and listen to the songs of birds—to the piping country larks, woodlarks—none of your town-bred skylarks, who sit perched upon their squares of turf like fat landed proprietors, but who, unlike some of those large-acred lords, peer through the iron bars of their cages, and, without repining,

pour out full-throated songs in praise of the warm sunshine, the blue sky, and heaven itself.

"Inside this little window you may see the sexton in his room. He is an old man, with a bare head, nearly as naked as a billiard-ball, and looking like a long yellow egg somewhat out of shape. A few books, a dozen or so parochial notices, a hat turned up at one end of the brim, from a constant habit of its wearer of looking up at the bell-ropes; a cotton pocket-handkerchief, of a faded blue colour; a stout, worn stick, with a large mud mushroom at the end, and very shiny and crooked in the handle; and a little crutch—a child's crutch only—in the corner of the room.

"Such things," continued the artist, after rising and looking intently into the eyes of his sitter, "the eye of any one will catch, as he looks into the room of Mr. Mathew Bohn, Sexton of St. Saviour's-at-Hill. Above the mantelshelf is a blunderbuss, with a brass barrel and a flint lock, with a priming-pan as big as a saltcellar; and there, too, polished and kept as an ornament, is a bell of somewhat ancient date. If any one wishes to know more about that hand-bell, a tall black board outside the door will tell him that good citizen Dowe did leave, two hundred and fifty years ago, a sum of money, that the sexton might toll, in the still hour of night, this hand-bell as near as he could to the cell of the fast-dying man—a man dying in sound health, bethink you—and cry out a kind of doggerel warning him of his fate:—

> 'All you that in the condemned hole do lie,
> Prepare you, for to-morrow you shall die;
> And, when St. Saviour's bell to-morrow tolls,
> The Lord have mercy on your souls?'

"In those good times how often—let us say at least every Monday morning—was some poor creature awakened by the rough summons of the bellman from the sleep which Nature had kindly given him, as a respite from the thoughts of wrong and cruelty, neglect and death, which racked his worn, tired brain. 'And many died innocent then, sir,' said the sexton to me. 'Those were dreadful days—days of blood-money, days when Jonathan Wild, and some o' them awful men as wicked authors and publishers make heroes of, bred up their victims to the gallows, just as one breeds chickens for the spit.' True enough it is. 'But, after all, they were good old times then,' added the old man, and he nodded his head, and began a low whistle, expressive chiefly, it may be, of his admiration for the times.

"'Mr. Dowe, sir, he did a good thing, though,' said the sexton one day to me as I sat by him in his room near the porch. 'He meant well, you see; and them as means well cannot always go wrong anyhow. You see the High Toby Swells who died game—the Gentleman Jacks, and Jack Sheppards, and such people, did not die off there then' (he nodded his head in the direction of the city prison); 'but there was crowds come early to see 'em brought out, and they followed 'em too: and some on 'em stepped boldly into the cart, and sat on their coffins; and some hung down their heads and wept; and them as was any way currish, the crowd, I've heerd, shouted at and jeered. Poor souls! a many of 'em hung for stealing of five shillings, may be. But the lads that died game came out in a tarnished laced coat, and a cocked hat may be, with a lace scarf, bought by some woman who loved 'em, for the last ride on to Tyburn. For you see,

sir, that among the many things that men 'a got to thank God for is that women don't desert 'em at the last, whether they are as good as heaven's saints, or as bad as—them as is the opposite to such, the Lord forgive 'em. Well, sir, to prepare 'em for that dreadful ride, my ancestor in this office, him as went before me long years ago, used to look over the yard wall, and cry out, "All good people, pray heartily for these poor souls who are going to their death!"'

"'Poor souls, indeed! Why, this place is thronged with memories,' said I, looking into the quiet wondering face of the speaker.

"'Yes, yes,' said the sexton. 'Up those wide stairs that lead to our galleries, how many prayerful souls have mounted! how few steps go up now! We fill our galleries with charity boys, sir, and, as I sit in my seat, I can look down on the young rascals flocking round the big organ, and looking staid and solemn enough in their faces, 'cos they fronts the master, but playing at odd and even behind his back, or suckin' away at physic bottles full of liquorice-water, which they thinks finer than champagne, I dare say. Boys will be boys, sir; and in our City churches, which are not very full anyhow, it's lonesome like for children.'

"'It is indeed,' I answered. 'It would be well to have children's services, as we have children's story-books and magazines; and in those litanies one could tell them all the love and beauty of the gentle faith, and give them the sweet-scented flowers of religion, without the thorns of doubt and the brambles of wickedness and error.'

"'Ay, ay, sir,' said the sexton, taking up the polished little crutch and dandling it on his knee with evident affection;

'that's just what little Jim said, years ago. He's a wise child, sir; very wise indeed. You should hear him; it would do you good. He plays at parson sometimes, and reads me a solemn sermon, I can tell you.'

"'How old is he now?' I asked.

"'The same as ever; just rising eight,' answered the sexton, shaking his bald little head, and looking dreamily in the fire. 'They don't grow old there; there's no time, no day and night, no striking of the clock or tolling of the death-bell up in heaven. Well, before little Jim became as he was, the very last grave as I opened here, on the north side of the church, was to put away Jim's mother, who went away from me as all the people go, and left me and Jim a-waiting. He was only six, and he stood in his black weepers and little cloak on the side of the coffin, and said, quite calmly, "Mother won't come again." "No," says I, "Jim, my man, she won't," and I choked like; "but she was obliged to go," says I, "because she was called; but where she is she'll wait for us." "Oh," said the boy, looking bright and sensible, "that'll do then;" and he never asked a word, but laid his little pale face aside of mine in the night, and when he woke up in his pain—for some drunken fool had thrown the child down and lamed him long before—he said, "Mother waits for us, father; when shall we two start?"

"'You must know that he was not sad, sir; he was as merry as a bird, and hopped about the churchyard on his little crutch, calling it his garden. He didn't grow in his body, it was all in his mind, sir. He learnt his letters off the tombs, or out of the church books, and used to look up to the

stone cherubs as his little brothers. I often wondered at that child—so wise, so thoughtful, looking, as he would sometimes, from the tower window—for I carried him up there on fine days—at the crowds of people going on, and never wanting to leave me to go out and play. "See, father," he would say, "there they all go past and leave us; they never, never come and take us, for we wait for mother till we can go home there."

"'He had no more doubt, sir, that that was *home* than I have now—now he's gone to it, and sometimes comes to me. He used to think some of the verses on the tombstones very queer. "Affliction sore long time I bore," he used to sing, as if it were a funny song; for he said that if one tried to forget one's pains, and looked forward to goin' home, as the boys that came and played with him amid the grave-stones did to their holiday, one wouldn't mind it much. When the sun came round in the evenings, near to settin' like, it glinted from the west along the wall of the church, and fell upon the grave of his mother, where Jim would go and sit. It was behind the church, for the wardens didn't allow such as me to have one of the best places. Yes, sir; tombs is like situations. I once took little Jim up to the big cemetery, for a treat—up at Kensal Green there—and there,' said he, 'were the tombs all shoving each other, and pressing into front ranks along the sides of the walks, shoulder to shoulder. "Come, dress up there," says a big moniment, "and you little grave-stone fall back to rear rank." Yes, sir, they sizes them just like they do the grenadier company in a regiment. Well, we've got one of the hinder ranks; we are rather squeezed

into a corner; but when the last trump sounds, and they beat to arms up there, I dare say we shall be able to get out. You see, I've been an old soldier, sir, and know all about it. I used to drill Jim with his crutch, and when he said (because we tried to grow flowers on the grave and for want of air they withered)—when he said as our bed was a little too backwarder, I told him that one of the manœuvres in war was to change face, left half face, left half face again, or right about face at once; and that then the front rank fell into the rear after all. In summer evenings, when the old bells about here chimed the evenin' hymn, little Jim came out to this corner bit, with his crutch and his milk, and looked to his flowers. He had great patience with 'em, but somehow they wouldn't grow. They looked beautiful and smelt sweet for, oh! so short a time; then grew spindly, and died; and I couldn't find no comfort for Jim, but he found it for himself. Yes, sir, he thought it out in this ways:

" ' " Father," says he, one day, in the winter, looking up with an eye as bright as a young blackbird's, " there's a many flowers we've put on mother's grave."

" ' " Yes, Jim," I answered.

" ' " And none on 'em ever growed much to speak on," says he.

" ' " I can't say they did, Jim," I returned, thoughtfully, for them flowers somehow mouldered down; they tried to grow, they did, I'm thinking, but they was unsuccessful; and when things are unsuccessful, somehow we blames 'em.

" ' " You see," says he, " though it's a bed for mother and us, it's a grave for them poor things, brought all out of the

country, may be out of the sweet fields and the scented hedge rows that I read about, and so, taking to their grave, they die, and go through that narrow gate to heaven. And in the fields up there, where mother's waiting for us, they grow, no doubt, larger and finer; and the good thoughts and sweet sayings we've had about her, and the flowers we've planted round her grave, don't all die, but spring up in all their glory to delight and please her in the fields of heaven."

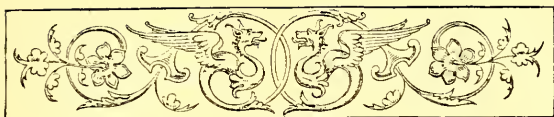
" ' " Why, Jim," says I, "that's about as good doctrine as ever parson preached. There was a young curate—young curates are flowery, sir—as did something like it, but not quite so good. "You've solved a mystery to me, my boy. Out of the mouths of babes——"

" ' " Ah, father," says he, with a sweet smile, " I'm going up there soon to look after that garden against you come. I feel very tired like, and weak, and my back does ache so, and my heart goes heavily, thump, thump, thump——as heavily as my crutch along the aisle when people look at me as I go out of church on Sundays."

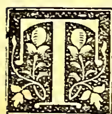
" ' Jim said no more, sir; that night he went away. He was curled up, with one red spot in his white cheek, early in the morning lying awake, and he woke me. "Father," says he, " I saw mother last night, and she spoke to me the first lines of that old hymn: 'Teach me to live.' ' Oh, I know that, mother,' said I, ' bed and the grave are one to me, for you are there—and now——' " then a twitch of pain passed across him and made him open his sweet eyes—oh, so wide, with such a different look from that they ever bore while living! and then it seemed to go, and he turned and kissed

my hand, and laid his cheek upon it with a great sigh of relief, and smiled upon me as he went away.

"'He sometimes comes again, sir, but he doesn't want a crutch now. He gives me good advice, and when I toll the bell for wicked men I see him looking sad and praying in the dark; but most times he's radiant with love and smiles, as if he had long ago found out the flowers and the fields that grow in the sweet country that lies beyond the grave.'"



# SOME WINDOWS IN BOW STREET.

HE three friends sat silent for some time after Scumble had concluded his story. At last, with a sigh, Felix said, "'Tis a great pity poverty can't be done away with."

Upon which Carew, knocking the ashes from his pipe, arose, and said, with as much of a sneer as he ever allowed himself when any thought of Felix's merited castigation, "Is it not a great pity that the Devil is not banished at once, and that Dr. Cumming's millennium is not here? What cowards we are getting! Why, we *can* banish poverty if we like; we can destroy all its evil and its sad effects; we can make people better and teach them to be wise—if we can manage only to agree on the way to set about it."

"I tell you what," said Scumble, gravely; "I have been poor, and still would be; poverty is a most blessed condition. That poor little chap of whom I had spoken had the best of it, and has not missed his heaven; whereas I and Carew there——"

"Don't talk of us, you beggar," said the author. "We are to be pitied or made much of. 'Tis those rich ones, with

their twenty thousand a year, who do nothing; those are the men who will be pinched. Is it not so, Cimabue? Don't we work with the sweat of our brains, and ought we not to enjoy all that we get?"

"Capital and labour," said Felix, sententiously.

"Eh! what have we to do with that?" asked Carew. "Whenever a man is stumped in conversation, he cries out something about capital and labour. You, Sir Oracle, what is it? Do you mean to say that we do not labour?"

"Not by any means," answered his friend Felix; "you labour well, I believe, and to good ends—only you, and such as to whom God has given talent, are rich men, just as rich as those to whom He has given estates of several hundreds a year. And you'll have more to answer for, I can tell you; for those poor people, who indeed are much to be pitied, who are born to large estates, great duties, a terrible disinclination to fulfil those duties, and a swarm of base sycophants about them, every one looking out to get money from them, have their hands much more hampered and their brains a good deal more muddled than yours."

"Oh, they have, have they?" laughed Carew. "Hark to him, Cimabue: isn't he rich? Why, the young one is enough to delight a whole gallery-full of pressmen."

"I don't know but what he is right, though, Carew. I know that I would rather be born with a passion for art, and a capacity of earning money by my art, than to an estate of many thousands a year. But, look ye, don't let us talk in this way of apportioning faults. There are faults, grave faults among us, and every day the people—that is, the working

people—are getting more and more impatient of them. I've seen that for a long time."

"Ay, and I too," said Carew, looking gravely; "and I am sorry to see that almost universally, save in one or two noble instances, the press blinks the whole question. But the Lords are awake to their danger, and so are the Commons—some of them. They are ready to yield anything at a moment's pressure, not because the demand is just, but because they fear that resistance would lead to an uprising. It seems somewhat absurd to predict a servile insurrection in England, does it not? and yet, really and truly, I fear that we shall have a bad one unless our laws are amended. But there is one comfort. The English put up with a great deal, and put up with it for a long time. Why, how long ago was it that Horne Tooke cut the ground from under the lawyers, by proving that they did not understand their own language?"

"If they do, they understand more than I do," said Cimabue. "I have just got a lease to my house, and I will be hanged if I comprehend it."

"Yes," continued Carew, "Horne Tooke abundantly proved that he was the victim of non-comprehension on the part of his judges of 'two prepositions and a conjunction.' And remember that the judges he convicted were men then and now honoured as lights of the law. There is a sentence of his that I have learned by heart, it is so true and so fitted to warn any one who writes for the public. 'Mankind in general are not aware that words without meaning, or of equivocal meaning, are the everlasting engines of fraud and injustice; and that the *grimgribber* of Westminster Hall is a

much more fertile and more formidable source of imposture than the *abracadabra* of magicians.'"

"I should think it was," said Felix; "but what did he mean by *grimgribber?*"

"His editor makes a note of it; all I can tell you is that Bentham uses it, and that I understand by it a confusing jargon. 'It may be connected,' says the editor, 'with *gramarye*, which is, probably, a corruption of *grimoire*, which signifies a conjuring book, in old French romances, if not the art of necromancy itself.'"

Carew was about to add to this explanation, when Belisarius, who had gone downstairs to answer a knock, returned with a card.

"By Jingo! twelve o'clock!" said Cimabue, looking at his watch and then at the card; "why, I declare I've forgotten my appointment with Lady Boulter. Show her up, Belisarius. Will you excuse me, Mr. Straightways? I have a very sufficient reminiscence of your face, and I can finish it another time."

"Lucky for our friend," said Carew, clearing away the pale ale, and hurrying with the pipes behind the screen. "I hope her ladyship won't smell the tobacco."

"Bless you, she will not mind it; she looks upon Bohemianism as a natural state for an artist. Here, light this pastille: mingled with the scent of tobacco and the smell of paint, it will form a nice perfume. Good morning, pray come again whenever you have time."

So saying, Mr. Scumble rose and welcomed a charming lady, who was delightfully polite, and whom Carew and Felix saluted respectfully as they passed out.

"Well," said Carew, "how lucky it was that Lady Boulter arrived! I wanted to get away, for I am about to read a play at the Crow Street Theatre, and I've no doubt that you would like to go with me. We have plenty of time: let us stroll down Bow Street, and lounge about Covent Garden for a while."

"Delighted, I am sure," returned Felix, who began to think that he should spend his holidays very pleasantly. "What a capital fellow your friend is!"

"As good as gold," returned Carew: "they are simple honest fellows, the artists, when they are not spoiled by society."

"Spoiled by society?" asked Felix, looking up in wonder: "how can that be?"

"Why, you see, many of them get very much asked out, and give themselves monstrous airs, in consequence. In fact, artists are more appreciated than other men of genius, partly because their works are more easily understood, but chiefly because they come more readily in contact with great people. Now you will see that Lady Boulter will ask Cimabue to one of her soirées, and he, silly fellow, will go."

"Why is he silly, if he likes such company?"

"Because he will be out of place there. Most of the people are stupid, and will stare at him as they would at a tumbler or *saltambanque*, and the others, who are not stupid, are too much engrossed by themselves, and their own fancied importance as big-wigs, to say anything. Besides this, cloth of gold and cloth of frieze don't mix well together."

"I am afraid you are a dreadful democrat," said Felix, with a smile.

"Not a bit of it; a true aristocrat, if our aristocracy were the *Aristoi*, the best and wisest. But, above all these reasons, a man of art has no call to waste his time in these frivolous assemblies which all people hate, and only give just to be in the fashion."

By this time the two friends had reached a street celebrated enough in its way—one of the streets of the world, if there be such. It has its name every day in the papers, and its court news is of more true interest than that given with such loyal unction by the Court newsman. It is true this court is a police court; but matters appertaining to life and death are debated therein, and outside the door, beyond the guard of lounging police officers, whose stolidity seems to transcend the most stolid of the British nation, are broken men, dazed and anxious women, parents half maddened with the knowledge that the guilt and shame of their child will anon be published, wives whose red eyes and trembling hands attest the love they have for their fallen husbands, and beyond these the usual motley crowd of hangers-on, *flâneurs*, idlers, people who always have half-an-hour to spend, and prefer to spend it somewhere where their feelings will be touched.

"It's a wonderful street, this street," said George Carew, standing opposite the theatre, "and some wonderful people go up and down it. You will observe that it is always sunny, when there is any sun to be seen, and that, lounging up and down and in and out these taverns, you see a tribe of men who are closely shaven, pale, cadaverous-looking, but yet with something of the air of genius about them."

"Yes; who are they? They are pale enough, to be sure. What fine eyes some of them have, and what lank cheeks!"

"Ay, ay," continued George, nodding familiarly to one of these gentry. "These are the actors; most of them, too, I fancy, out of work. You see that there are several theatrical agents in this street, persons who are supposed to have great influence with country managers, and who can get young Thespians an engagement with fine pay and all that, at any time in the year. But these agents are, for the most part, fellows who promise much and do little."

"Mere humbugs," said Felix, throwing in a word.

"Well, I won't say that. Some of them are; but, really, the theatrical profession, as its devotees call it, is so poor, so uncertain, and, to the crowd employed, so miserably disappointing, that one cannot wonder at its agents being sad fellows. Why, they send young fellows to learn their art down in the country to a wretched theatre, where the ghost never walks."

"Ghost never walks! Where they don't play 'Hamlet,' I suppose you mean," said Felix, rather puzzled, but convinced that he had hit upon the true solution of the difficulty.

"Not a bit of it. Theatrical slang, which I dare say seems very witty to adepts—like all slang, by the way—is essentially stupid to outsiders. Why they use such a phrase, I don't know, but the ghost's walk means the payment of their salaries. Does the ghost walk to-night? is a question often asked with the most bitter seriousness and the deepest concern by a heavy tragedian with, it may be, a sick wife and a large family of small children. But, here, don't let us talk about it:

it is true that the profession has large prizes for some people, if they choose to sacrifice time, genius, peace of mind, and reputation too often, to the *métier*, but the realities of the profession are too stern and hard to be spoken of calmly by a man who has feeling. Why, sir, there are men of fifty, first-rate actors, scholars and gentlemen, who can't get a decent engagement at six pounds a week; no, nor at half that sum."

"Three hundred a year," said Felix.

"Ay, if you take the year round," returned his friend: "but what actor is able to do that? No one. Hallo, Belville, is it you? What are you doing?"

This was addressed to a short brown man, with his face painfully shaven, and not without a certain dry humour about it, who came up in company with a taller man, also scraped and shaven up to his very ears, and behind and above his ears too.

"Bobbish, my boy," said Belville. "So you've got it out at last, 'ave you? Well, it will be a success, I can tell you." Mr. Belville was one of those merry, sanguine men, who, enjoying good health, and a fine digestion, are in a good humour with the world, and seem determined to make everybody else in a good humour with them and it too. He was always prophesying success to others, and sometimes was not mistaken; he praised everybody, and never said an ill word of any one; so that some people suspected him of being false, or, as they phrased it, a humbug. But Belville really thought that every aspirant would turn out a Kean, and, with considerable appreciation of art, was so good-natured that he let his judgment too often fall asleep.

The tall muscular man, his companion, he introduced to

Carew as Tommy Milano, the clown—"the best clown," he said, "since Grimaldi," who apparently set the fashion of Italian names, for Mr. Milano was a John Bull to the backbone, and, although he was humorous enough on the stage, with a whitened face and triangular patches on his cheeks, looked more like a stalwart sporting man, with bronzed cheek, and a healthy appearance too often foreign to gentlemen of his profession.

"Ain't he lookin' prime, sir?" said Belville. "Ay, he's a wonderful creetcher, he is; been playin' to full 'ouses at Margate, makin' 'is fortune."

"'Old yer tongue, 'Arry Belville," said the clown. "No such luck on the cards; 'ouses pretty good, but we poor fellows don't make fortunes nowadays."

As he spoke, Mr. Milano, as well as Mr. Belville, looked round for applause; and the conscious strut of the one, and the looks of the other, testified that they were quite ready to accept the flattering notice of the urchins and little shopgirls and clerks who pointed them out, with a "There, that's 'im; that's Tom," which was by far too frequent for Felix, who found himself one of four who suddenly became the centre of attraction.

"Well, now," said Mr. Belville, "what's up? Your young friend, sir, 'as a nice face for light comedy. I want a good walking gent, as must be tip-top in 'is wardrobe; and I can promise 'im thirty bob a week."

"Ah, that is not his forte," said Carew, with a smile.

"Isn't it, now? Well, p'raps I'm wrong; but now I look, he wouldn't make a bad first old man, if he was mugged up a bit, you know."

"Well, when he wants an engagement," said the author, drawing his friend's arm within his own, and moving onwards, "I'll apply to Mr. Harry Belville, theatrical agent. Good morning."

"Yes, that's it. I'm sure to fit him; I've several good jobs on. The old shop, recollect." And, then lapsing into a momentary forgetfulness of the shop, he asked, with an insinuating smile, "What are you goin' to stand?"

Carew shook his head good-naturedly, and passed on. "Queer fellows, are they not?" said he, when they were fairly out of ear-shot, and the great Tommy Milano—whom little boys looked at in the expectation that he would spring through one of the shop windows, and then appear at the first floor, with "How are you? Here we are again!" his own familiar greeting—had turned up Crow Court to ascend to Mr. Harry Belville's offices.

"Well, I don't feel flattered at being taken for an old man, first or second," returned Felix; "and what the dickens did the man mean by being 'mugged up'?"

"Slang! slang again; the curse of society; a mere shibboleth, which will eventually destroy our language. You must understand that when one's face is properly set to carry age and character, expression—such as wonder, sorrow, piety, anger—and painted, whitened, reddened, or wrinkled, it is 'mugged up.' The phrase may not be known, but the custom is well understood, in all kinds of life. I once knew two men, one a Stock-Exchange man, and the other a gentleman travelling for orders in the wine trade, who made as much in a week as I do in a month. They both used to set their faces for business; the latter gentleman had a

peculiar, bland, pleased, cheerful expression, quite foreign to the man, but which made his fortune."

"Surely you are jesting."

"Not a bit of it," said Carew; "I study people and speak the truth, even what I see and observe. A friend of mine—indeed, a school and college fellow—is a ritualistic clergyman, and he walks in procession up the aisle of his church, following his acolytes and choristers. Sometimes I go with him into his vestry; and let me tell you that he really sets his face and assumes a pious, beatific expression, not unlike that found in the works of the Spanish religious painters, which is greatly admired by his congregation. I don't say the man is not earnest, though I know him to be weak and foolish; but I assert positively that he 'mugs himself up' for his holy office, and puts on an expression, just as he puts on the green and gold things which he was the first to assume."

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" said Felix, with a sigh—for Carew's conversation carried conviction with it—"what a world of masks it is!"

"Right you are," returned Carew, quoting the prevailing slang; "here you can see them all for nothing."

He swung his young friend round suddenly to a shop in which all kinds of masks were to be seen; some grinning horribly, some with terrible and distorted faces, pink eyelids, green eyes, horrent mouths, noses full of pimples, and cheeks of a varied and blossomy character, which was enough to frighten any one into teetotalism—that is, if we suppose the masks to have been of the contrary economy. That ingenious artist Dyk Wynkyn had exhausted his ingenuity in devising these dreadful coverings for the human face divine:

some were in the shape of owls, some of bears, some of dogs; and elephants, pigs, tigers, and lions were not absent.

"Here," said the author, "is part of the paraphernalia of a pantomime. Paraphernalia is a good word, is it not?"

"You ought to know," answered Felix; "pretty good, I should think."

"No, it is not; I hate long and fine words; and, moreover, it does not fit. Head-gear, or head-furniture, would do better. Why we submit to the preliminary nonsense in masks, rhymes without reason, spoken through pasteboard, so as not to be heard, I don't know. All I can say is, that every reasonable man can see a fine opening for a pantomime that should be beautiful and poetic, not nonsensical and monstrous; however, here we are, and there is some of the frippery of the stage.

"Next door, you see," said Carew, passing onwards, "is the celebrated Mr. March's shop, the costumier's. Mr. March can find you dresses for any period in the world's history, even that of Nebuchadnezzar, when he went on all fours and ate grass; for he has some strange animal dresses. He will dress 'King John,' with four hundred supernumeraries, or 'Box and Cox,' with only three characters, and, what is more, will furnish a dozen theatres at once. Here, look at his window. There are some fine shoes and swords; those long lank pink things are what are called tights, actually hose—the calves are ingeniously stuffed with wool; there's a clown's gaberdine next to a king's dress; here a knightly helmet, and there the headpiece of the Iron Mask: here is a bishop's mitre, and there a fool's bauble. Was there ever such a levelling-place in the world? In this window, as in the grave,

we lay down all dignities, all paintings, patchings, heraldic devices, great state and titles, and all the lendings of the world. Come away, and see what more can be seen.

"Here is our friend the barber's; you may find all kinds of 'thatch' here, as a friend calls it, for any head. There is the wig of a wise judge, there the carroty poll of the fool; here is Hamlet's light hair, *à la* Mr. Fechter, who is, I apprehend, undoubtedly correct in that; and here the black Charles II. locks, that Mr. Edmund Kean and the crew who copied him used to play it in; here is Jack Sheppard's coiffure, there the beautiful golden chesnut curls of Nell Gwynne—there the short curly 'Brutus' of the noblest Roman of them all. Look at the boys there—how they are devouring the contents of the next window. That is an armourer's?"

"An armourer's? what does he have to do with the theatre?"

"A great deal! Look at those guns—they are absolutely firelocks; it will not do for our purists to arm the troops of Charles II. with the Snider rifle. Then, you see, there are swords of all times—from the double-handed sword of the Templar, worn at the back, to the Spanish rapier of Don Giovanni. Here are daggers galore, and hilts covered with precious stones, or what looks better, imitation, coloured glass with foil. There is a jeweller's farther on, where you can get all sorts of decorations and orders, and whose goods are really remarkable for their work and brilliancy. Beyond that, a little lower down, is a shop specially for lace, spangles and ladies, at which you may dress up a fairy, a genie, or one

of those gold-and-silver angels who look so glorious in the transformation scene, at a moment's notice. Hallo! what's that?"

"Is that yours, sir?" said a stalwart-looking working man, holding up Carew's silk handkerchief.

"Yes, it is—I will thank you for it."

"I thought so; then you will please come along with me over the way. The magistrate's sitting, and we will make quick work of this. Come first into this office and enter it in the charge sheet."

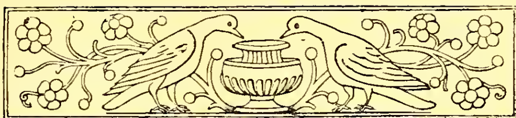
The policeman—for such he was, in plain clothes—held tightly grasped by the collar a greasy-looking boy, who had been making free with Carew's handkerchief while he was looking in at the window, and who in the face of the crowd who assembled to see him, assumed a bold, swaggering expression, as if he were rather than otherwise the hero of the occasion.

"But I didn't feel him do it," said Carew.

"No one would. Look at them flippers." He held up the boy's hands, as soft and as delicate as a lady's. "And whose," he said, "is this little article?" So saying, he held up to the astonished gaze of Felix a square purse worked with beads by his wife, which he very much prized, and which a few moments before he had in his trousers' pocket.

"Why, that is mine! How did he get it? I never felt anything."

"Law bless you——Now just move on, won't yer? What is there to see——He's the cleverest one out. You look so simple, do you see? that he's dodged yer; you didn't feel him, but I saw him; so come along with me, gents, if you please."



## THE POLICE-COURT WINDOW.

T was lucky for our two friends that they had started early, and had yet some time before them, for they were forced to troop off in a motley procession to the police-court.

It was lucky, too, that the passage from the armourer's window, at which our friends lost their property, was not very far from the police-court; for the crowd, which increased every second, would have terribly annoyed and pressed them.

Shrieks from coster-women, "Here, Davy, here's the game 'un's got took;" cries from the wild London Arab to his associate, "Oh my! 'ere, Billy, come 'ere; 'ere's a cove as is in for it;" and the like rang in their ears. One or two people asked plaintively why they didn't let the boy go, and many, who did not and could not understand anything about it, volunteered an explanation to the crowd that surrounded them.

At length, opposite the police magistrate's office our friends found a body of four or five policemen lounging round the door in a half military, half official way, who, when they saw the crowd approach, walked up to the van-

guard of boys, pulled off their caps, threw them to a distance, and otherwise, partly playfully and partly with cuffs, dispersed the ragged troop, which immediately re-formed on the flanks of the crowd, and saluted the "bobbies" with cat-calls and chaff.

The diversion made by the police, however, enabled the game 'un and his two accusers safely to enter the sacred precincts wherein justice was administered; and, suddenly passing from the outer light into inner darkness, Felix found himself, for the first time in his life, inside a police-court.

It was a queer, dirty place—stone and paint, without any attempt at ornament—when thronged by daily crowds of the poor and miserable, not giving much outward beauty even to the eye of the policeman. Passing through a long passage, and getting a glimpse of barred windows, through which a yard might be seen, surrounded by many little cells, Felix and Carew reached an office, wherein, behind a railed division, sat a young and good-looking inspector, at a charge-sheet. "Well," said this officer to the policeman in plain clothes, "what! here again; what have you now, Beales?"

It was evident from this that Beales had been there before that morning, and that he was really an active and intelligent officer, as indeed he was, with a complete passion for thief-taking, which he studied by day, and upon which he meditated by night.

"Well," said Beales, drawing in his breath—a habit that he had—and taking a leisurely survey of the office—not that he did not know it, but because he was in the habit of throwing his eyes round every apartment—"well, I've got him at last."

As the criminal, who was nowise disconcerted, was not tall

enough to be visible above the official railings, which were about the height of a tall man's chest, Mr. Inspector had risen, with his heels on the crossbar of his office stool, and looked over at the culprit. "Why," said he with a pleased expression, "it's Pip, the game 'un."

"Oh, yes, it's me, hofficer," said Pip: "but don't make no remarks, do your duty. Here's William Beales has been an' took me; and these two gents will be cruel enough to go an' swear as how some of their property 'as been found on me." Mr. Pip tried to look like a martyr, but did not succeed; and in a very short time, in a very business-like way, the charge was made out on the ruled and tabulated charge-sheet, and Mr. William Beales suggested to Pip that his little game was up, because his "flint" would be fixed now.

"You'll be in good time if you make haste," said the inspector, touching a bell and giving to an attendant satellite, in blue with pewter buttons, the charge sheet. "The night charges were very few, and there is not much before his worship. Will you be so kind, gentlemen, as to follow the policeman?"

Felix, who felt himself in a perfectly novel situation, which he did not at all like, and who would have been, perhaps, much more glad than Mr. Pip to have "bolted" directly he got out of the police station, here whispered Carew: "Must we prosecute this poor boy? It would be better to lose the purse and handkerchief, and to let him go. Say something."

"It's of no use," answered his friend; "it would be much *easier* for us to let the thing pass off, but not much *better*. The boy is a thoroughly accomplished thief, and we may make

him better by punishment. Besides, you don't know anything of law; when it once gets you in its clutches you can't possibly escape. We are fixed, I can tell you; let us hope that it won't keep us long."

"I'm sure I hope so," said Felix gloomily; and then the two friends went out, and, crossing the road, emerged once more into the bright sunshine, where a very large crowd was assembled round a dark omnibus-looking van, and watching the depositing within that van of persons whose cases had been disposed of. But the sunshine lightened them up but for a minute, for they at once entered a building very like the last, somewhat more dirty, and very much more crowded, and with two or three waiting-rooms on the right-hand side of the dirty corridor, into one of which Mr. William Beales, a plain-clothes man, commonly but erroneously called a detective, hurried his prisoner, and told Carew and Felix to wait till he came back.

"I wish we had been a mile off," said Felix; "I'm sure I don't want to convict that unhappy boy; and waiting here will be a bore."

"You will see life, at any rate," rejoined Carew; "and as for waiting, it won't be for long; for I've tipped the policeman, and he will be here in a minute. I must assure him that I can't afford to lose my appointment, and give him an order for the theatre: these fellows like going to theatres; they combine business and amusement very cunningly there, and, while they are laughing at a farce, may be watching a thief."

So it was that, when the active and efficient officer returned, Mr. Carew arranged with him, that if the young pickpocket could not be at once brought up and dealt with in a summary

manner, the case should stand over. But the policeman was a fellow of some energy; for in a short time he returned—having gone purposely into the court—and told our two friends that their case would be decided after the one then on; he had in fact spoken to the usher of the court, who had arranged it with some other authority, and he gladly moved the two prosecutors, and a witness, who, being an English *flâneur*, was only too ready to run in and give his evidence, through a stone passage into a frowsy court, full of pews, like a church, in the middle, but with a small space for the public at one side, and a smaller, carpeted, and with a tiny library of reference, at the other; and thereat sat the magistrate, a shrewd and not an ill-humoured English barrister, who had been grinding away at this work for many years—for so many, indeed, that he believed all the men and women in the world possible rogues, thieves, murderers, and such like, and regarded the people brought before him with a kindly consideration that was quite touching to behold.

It was indeed not without reason that Sir John Chitty was called the worthy magistrate. He had been knighted; not on account of his services, which were many; not on account of his honesty and integrity, his learning and industry, which were great, but for that detestable and inhuman reason which obtains at the English fountain of honour—because, forsooth, some hundred years ago a Bow Street magistrate was knighted by one of our dull German kings, and henceforward a precedent was established. Thus, too, it is the custom to make the Lord Mayor a baronet upon certain auspicious occasions, and we have to put up with a small hereditary nobility, descendants of successful grocers, or timber-dealers,

*ad infinitum*, or as long as the august lines will last. Far be it from any one to look down on a grocer or wood dealer; in their own line they are estimable and excellent, so long as they don't cheat; but one must most seriously object to the fact that our present nobility is drawn too exclusively from successful grocers, tea-dealers, lawyers, and such people. No wonder that men of letters and men of genius refuse the Queen's favours in that way.

Such were the reflections which Carew made afterwards to Felix, though at present he made none; for directly they entered the fœtid court, which had about it a too prevalent smell of fustian, the usher at the door gave a "hush," and several volunteers "hushed" also; so that Carew and Felix crept like a couple of guilty things towards a kind of pew set aside for reporters, and disappeared in its friendly gloom with much rapidity.

"Hush!" said the usher again.

The trial proceeded, and the court was convulsed with a peculiar merriment, in which Felix could see no fun. This, however, is not to be wondered at; for every observer will have remarked that the jokes of barristers and judges are o the smallest possible size, and that yet reporters tell us that "shouts of laughter" and "great laughter, which was with difficulty suppressed," greet them all. Perhaps the reason of this is, that the horsehair wigs, the solemn shams, and general heaviness of law cause such a depression that the lightest joke possible is seized on as an excuse for a burst of laughter, which flares up and dies out as suddenly as the fire in a wisp of straw.

"Was it your barrow that she took, then?" asked the

magistrate of an obstinate, puzzle-pated Irishman, who seemed to have much delight in his position, and to take possession of the whole court with an Irish love for legal combativeness.

Paddy entered into a rigmarole statement, by which it appeared, or rather from which it was elicited, that he and the accused had bought two barrows, and that the young woman had chosen to take the best, or rather the one upon which he, the Irishman, had set his mind; hence the charge for theft.

Then the accused, a strong coster-girl in a glaring shawl and bonnet, her best—for she had dressed herself as well as she could to appear before the court—made her defence, and produced a sturdy English witness whose testimony cleared her, upon which the magistrate, who had made one or two notes, summed up and gave advice to the people concerned to live peaceably, and dismissed the case, and the accused came down from the bar, and surrounded by laughing and jeering friends, hurried out of court.

It was a strange sight, and a very novel one to Felix. He was struck with the friendly feeling between the litigants and the magistrate; with the commonplace way in which the oaths were administered, and the want of tremor or of any fear in the accused; with the easy way in which a servant-girl, who next came up, submitted to a charge of theft fully made out; with the carelessness with which she bade good-bye to her weeping mother; and the want of horror with which crime was received by policemen, clerks, audience, and magistrate. Here was one, blasted for life in reputation, setting off on the downward road with a sneer and a smile;

in ten or twenty minutes a life was, as Felix well saw, signed away in the report which the clerk wrote upon paper; and, for the paltry loss of a cloak, a fine dress, five shillings, and an old bonnet—how dowdy and contemptible the bundle looked as it was produced and sworn to—a finely-grown, strong, and good-looking girl was made the companion of thieves, and accepted almost with a curtsy the stigma which would last for life. Puzzled and strangely moved, Felix watched the reporter, a gentleman of colour, whose experience taught him only to jot down such cases as would please the public, write down his arbitrary signs, or, shutting his note-book, talk and laugh with his companion. Everything seemed to pass with the speed of actions in a dream, and he hardly knew where he was when Mr. Pip was produced, popped into the square pew where the servant-girl stood but a moment before, and Mr. Beales the detective stood before the clerk, took the Book, and kissed it with somewhat of a smack, vowing to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Pip the game 'un was not very tall, and very little of him was visible above the pew, so that the magistrate bent his head and readjusted his spectacles to bring the prisoner in the right focus.

"I'm here," said Pip: "here I am, your Worshup;" then he looked round with somewhat of the spirit of one who was in an exalted position, and, catching the familiar head of a policeman, nodded. "Nabbed at last, G No. 39," said he.

Pip's was an easy case, and the magistrate listened with polite deference to the very little that Felix and his friend

had to say. There the handkerchief and purse were, and even Pip, who attempted with keen wit to cross-question Felix himself, could do nothing. Everything was plain. The game 'un whispered to a grown-up friend who had somehow got near him, that it was "no go," and indeed a "gooser."

The magistrate looked at the culprit, and then at the clerk. "You're a bad boy," said he, "and have given us much trouble. We shall get rid of you for some time now. Do you know anything of him, Harding?"

Harding, the official who took note of such matters, read from a list: convicted at such a date, stealing from the person, from a shop, from the person again, and so on. Pip nodded and grinned, and did not deny it. In spite of his youth, the boy was an experienced thief.

The magistrate whispered to the clerk, and was about to speak, when Carew rose and asked whether this case was not one for a reformatory; and upon hearing this word Pip's countenance fell. The quick eye of the magistrate noticed it. "They are already crowded, sir, and we want now some one to pay something with the boy. Has he no parents, no friends?"

The lonely little wretch looked round the court with a grin. He with a parent or friend! he disdained such a luxury; kicked and cuffed, moved on, and half-starved, in the country and in town, on the streets or on race courses, he, alone and unaided, had kept up an independent war upon the pockets and property of the public.

"No friends, guv'nor," he said, with some pride. "No, I'm one of the all-alones. Come, give us six months' 'ard

labour." Then he added, dropping a wink at his acquaintance, and determined to keep up the character of the game 'un, "I'll do it on my 'ead."

"The boy," said Carew, "does not know the nature of crime, your Worship, and should be sent to a reformatory to be taught it. He is healthy, and with plenty of intelligence——"

"Such as it is," said the magistrate, with a sad smile; "we have no want of intelligence to complain of in his class—rather too much of it. The truth is, that if we send him to a reformatory, we must ask some benevolent person to pay eighteen-pence a week for the time he is there:—for two years."

Mr. Pip looked blank at this proposal; but he had great faith in the hard-heartedness of the world, and sniggered. "It's a little fortun'," he said, "guv'nor: no one 'll do it for a chap like me. You'd better give it me as you did afore."

Felix was not a rich man, and as for Carew, he was one of those people who may be said to be always poor and never rich, always rich and never poor. He had just as much as he wanted, and had indeed an inexhaustible fortune in a brain on which he often called and never called in vain. It is true that every now and then the physician warned him that he was working too hard or "living too fast," spending both brain and energy; but what of that? "The time would come to him which came to all," he said, "and there an end." So that, with the exception of a modest provision which he had made for his family, and which could be only available after his death, he had nothing.

"*Eh bien, mon ami*," said Carew, bending down to Felix, "I think I'll indulge in a luxury: I'll buy that boy."

"I'll go shares," cried Felix; "it's only ninepence a week; and one would spend as much as that in cigars. Speak out, George, my boy."

George did speak out; and the magistrate, with a kindly glitter about his eyes, was even more courteous to the gentlemen. "There will be a preliminary fee as to entrance," said he; "but I will do myself the pleasure of paying one-fourth of that, and the other fourth shall come from the poor-box. You will go with the officer outside, please, and pay your first instalment, or give your address; and I can assure you, gentlemen, that the money will not be thrown away, and that you will never miss it. Good morning."

Then turning to the clerk, he whispered something, and to the disconsolate Pip said, "Through the kindness of the gentlemen whom you have robbed, a kindness which you will one day understand, though you don't now, you will not be taken to prison, but be removed to the House of Detention, there to be talked to by the chaplain, and then on Tuesday next be delivered to the Master of the Reformatory at Redhill, and you will be kept there at instruction and labour for two years."

"Next case!" bawled the crier, while Mr. Beales, adroitly putting his hand in the bar, dock, or wooden pew, picked out young Pip as one would pick out a periwinkle from its shell.

Two years! Two whole years away from his beloved hunting-grounds in Drury Lane, away from the excitement

of being chased by the "Crushers," "Bobbies," or "Blue-bottles"; away even from the triumph of being lugged off by a peeler, and exchanging pleasant words with a magistrate the next morning; away from winter quarters in the House of Correction, and the still more pleasant game of dodging the warders, and communicating in some ingenious way with his fellow prisoners; all these were dear to Pip the game 'un, and the blow was sudden. It need not therefore surprise our readers to be told that Pip was game no longer, and, when he was removed from the sight of his benefactors and the public, set up a piteous yell, at which the whole court, police and all, laughed.

# THE "PRACTICABLE" OR STAGE WINDOW.

WHEN Felix and his friend came from the dark Avernus of the police-court, they—attracting some little attention for a few dozen steps from the court—wore faces serious enough. But they felt some relief, as if they had done a good action; indeed, each had paid his guinea towards Mr. Pip's further maintenance, and everybody in the court, from the worthy magistrate himself to a sweep who had been found mysteriously concealed in the wrong chimney, and whose case was to be next heard, had been polite to, and interested in them.

"I am sure I don't know why we laughed," said Felix, thinking over and giving himself up to a habit he had of analysing his feelings.

"'Tis a matter of contrast," ejaculated Carew, "this laughter, as well as a sudden feeling of superiority. We are like that hackneyed sea passenger in Lucretius, who, finding himself on shore, is somewhat delighted to see other people struggling in the waves. Moreover, not to be too

ill-natured with regard to mankind—a diabolical mistake, let me tell you, and stupid too, as suggestions of the devil always are—everybody in the court knew that the best that could be done would be done with that boy, and that therefore all his 'boo-boo-booing' was utterly out of place and ridiculous; so they laughed."

Felix again laughed too, as Carew unfolded the reason so plainly, and George, who loved young and simple natures, and in truth was young and simple himself in heart and mind, joined in the laughter.

"Well, you *are* merry, gents," said a small, bright-looking man who stepped out of a somewhat shabby brougham, and shook hands with Carew; "glad to see laughter anywhere, although I have spent my life in trying to make persons cry, and have only succeeded in making myself melancholy. Tragedy does not pay now-a-days; here is my friend Spindler; he rides in his brougham, and has given me a lift. Tragedy, sir, can't afford even an omnibus."

"Glad to see you, Mr. Carew," said Mr. Spindler, emerging from the brougham and drawing himself up. Then, turning to the coachman, he said, "Stage door at two," and linked his arm in that of the author; "and what has Sam been saying?" said he, "grumbling as usual?"

"All I said, Spindler, was that tragedy could not keep a brougham, and that comedy—and here I am complimenting you—could. If Garrick were again alive, he would not long hesitate between the laughing and the crying muse."

"Spect he never did," said the comedian; "comedy always drew more money, and money David Garrick loved. People like to be made to laugh, and, the dolts, some of them are

ashamed to cry. All I can say, Mr. Garthwaite, is this, that I would rather earn half my salary in tragedy or serio-comedy than I would the whole of it in farce; for I too am an actor."

"And a very good one too, Spindler," returned Carew; "though why you and half-a-dozen other comedians will always try to persuade the public that in reality tragedy is their forte, is to me one of the mysteries of your profession."

"It is simply ridiculous," said Garthwaite, "although comedy very often treads on the heels of tragedy; and the reverse is also the case sometimes. The souls of this generation——"

"Using generation in the sense of the playgoers of to-day?" interposed Carew.

"Exactly so—are too frivolous to be filled with a mighty tragic passion for a whole evening. They laugh it away with a farce immediately afterwards—a most inartistic and silly method. Tragedy might be prefaced with a piece of simple comedy, if possible pastoral, accompanied with music. Afterwards let 'gorgeous tragedy come sweeping by,' as Milton has it; and that being sufficing, exciting, noble, and full of fine thoughts, let the hearers go home to their beds fancy-bound in grand meditation. That is my idea of play-going; the theatre, under proper control and teaching, might be a grand school."

"Ay, a good notion too; but surely, Mr. Garthwaite, you pitch your requirements a note too high. People want to be amused in this work-a-day world. When the author, the painter, or the actor thinks only of teaching, he starves, or nearly so. The world is all too full of teachers, and there are so few learners—so very few."

Chatting thus in friendly mood our two friends with their companions came to the stage-door of the Crow Street Theatre Royal—they are all royal theatres now-a-days—and the four gentlemen entered, Felix being ushered in by his friend Carew. Passing by a solemn man in a cloth cap, who was carefully finishing the remains of an Irish stew, and who glanced at each one who entered with a significant look, he being the hall porter, the little company stayed for a moment while the porter reached down from a rack a couple of letters for Messrs. Garthwaite and Spindler, and, pulling a string, let them suddenly pass into what the tragedian called the "bowels of the land;" that is, into the back parts of the mimic world, where they found themselves in a kind of visible darkness, feebly lighted by a jet or so of gas, which, while it was a great deal too dull for the eyes, made itself only too apparent to the nostrils. Threading their way amongst scenes and flats, they soon found themselves on the stage, where Felix was quietly deposited at a side-wing to marvel at the strange scene before him.

Bare and grim, and covered with dingy brown holland cloths, the empty theatre yawned, dreadful to the unaccustomed eyes of Felix. The glass drops of the chandelier looked dirty, dull, and dead, like strings of human eyes in the kingdom of Dahomey; the pit a black gulf crossed with bare forms; the boxes, when they could be peeped into, so many black cupboards; the whole place deserted and solitary, save that the footlights were burning dimly, and in the centre of the stage an iron standard shed a flaring light upon the group gathered together. Under the standard a worn-out and seedy-looking gentleman, the prompter, stood, and, with a manuscript in his

hand, furnished words to several ladies and gentlemen who seemed to be much in need of his aid; and these, at certain words—ends of speeches, to which each actor and actress seemed very ready to get—would cross to right or left, and stand in a certain position, generally the wrong one, if one might judge from the stage manager, an excitable person, who every now and then emitted such phrases as these—

"Now, Mrs. Belmore, you are really quite wrong there; a little more pronounced, if you please. 'Then, Frank, if there is to be no friendship between us, *no* confidence, *no* trust, no LOVE'—cross to right centre at 'love,' if you please——"

"Pray let me do as I like, Mr. Spangles," the lady returned; "'no confidence, no trust, no love;'" this she said in the weakest possible voice, and the *jeune premier*, a stout gentleman of forty-five grunted out—

"Oh, well, I do hope you will put a little more fire in it on the stage;" and then, walking up to the lady in the most nonchalant style, he said, "Love is my cue, I think?"

"No confidence, no trust, no love," echoed the prompter, in a voice which long service in draughty theatres, and many colds caught in the service, had torn to rags.

"'Oh, Julia,' continued the tragedian, 'how easily you women talk of love! Love is the most ecstatic bliss'—and so on, I think, Mr. Blackwood, down to 'India, adieu!'"

"Yes; but a man don't go to India in that cool way; do put a little more life and go into it."

But life there was none. Every now and then, hearing the magic cue, some one concerned in the piece would dash into the centre, mutter a few words, and then retire. Now and then, but at long and weary intervals, two interlocutors seemed

to have studied and to know their parts and give an intelligible reading. The ladies and gentlemen were, moreover, but dingily dressed, not caring, perhaps, to trust fine morning dresses and broadcloth to the dirty precincts of the Crow Street Theatre; and, as everything takes some colour from its surroundings, the solemn dinginess of the theatre lent a shabby sombreness to the scene which was lighted up with the flaring cresset, and exhibited deep and horrid shadows that were melancholy and depressing in the extreme.

"Well, my young philosopher," said George Carew, coming to his friend and laying his hand upon his shoulder, "what do you think of this gay and festive scene? Is it not entrancing? is it not wonderfully intoxicating? quite a fairy palace, an enchanted bower, is it not?"

"Never saw anything so dull in my life," said Felix, rubbing his eyes as if he could not quite understand what he saw.

"Why, you are not half awake to its beauties," answered the author, with a grim humour. "That which you have heard, and which I am afraid you do not appreciate, is one of the most sparkling, brilliant, and witty comedies of the day—a comedy of manners, I can assure you. Mrs. Buckingham, there, is the sweetest actress ever seen on any stage: *vide* the public prints; Mr. Sterndale is, and has been for the last twenty years, the best representative of juvenile tragedy, or high comedy, that we can produce. I assure you that some of the young fellows of Cambridge, Oxford, or the West End clubs, would think you 'no end of a lucky fellow'—that is their charming phrase—if they knew that you had been behind scenes while Mrs. Buckingham was rehearsing."

"Are you joking, Mr. Carew?" asked Felix simply.

"Joking!" returned George; "no, Mr. Straightways, I am not: are you? What is it you want? Does not all the light literature of the day, and do not the novels of that popular lecturer, Ernest Brown, assure you that the wildest orgies are carried on behind scenes, and that young men of fortune throw away their gold on this magic ground? The fact is, you are disappointed; you now see for yourself, and the illusion is dispelled."

"I wish people, when they write, would try to convey truth. An immense deal of harm must have been done by those nonsensical novels that pretend to describe life as it is."

"Undoubtedly; but Truth! why, Felix, it is not every man who twirls a pen who can see truth; think of that, and be charitable to the poor fellows. Perhaps they really do believe that comic singers are better company than noblemen and gentlemen, and that an actress in plain clothes speaks with all the brilliance and wit of the comedy writer who has racked his brains to produce the mental fireworks she lets off. However, you are under my guidance; here you see things as they are."

"And surely they are dull enough," said Felix. "Well, I am glad of it; I like to rub off my illusions."

"Oh, you silly young fellow!" said Carew; "keep them as long as you can; believe that every woman is an angel, and every man a patriot. Look here——" The author took his young friend a little forward, and pointed out a cottage window, close, perhaps too close, indeed, to the door, around which roses and honey-suckles appeared to cling in natural and sweet profusion. In colour the "flat" was beautiful,

and, indeed, it had been touched in with so masterly a hand that even at the little distance at which the young man stood it looked charming.

"Stand there," whispered Carew, as he "posed" Felix; "there, now the light shines on it, is it not pretty? Give your imagination full rein; fancy yourself amid scenes of rural innocence, miles away in the country. On the right stretch wide fields of waving corn, to the left there are woodlands and grassy dells, and at the back a trout stream hurries and sparkles down, singing over its pebbly bed, from the spring whence it rises in the blue hills in the far distance. In this cottage, my dear young friend, dwells the gem—no, a gem does not dwell—the beauty, the fairy of this romantic tale. We will call her Phœbe Mayflower. Let me peep through this window; I will open the lattice; yes! there she is."

Carew spoke so naturally, and described the scene so well, that Felix, having something of the imagination of a poet, found himself carried away, and for the moment believed that some fair girl was within the cottage.

Gently his friend opened the practicable casement and peeped within; then, still keeping up the illusion, he said, "Ah, no! she is not here; let us seek her in the next room;" and, opening the creaking door, drew his friend within. A dim light from a distant jet lighted up the back of the wooden framework on which the canvas was nailed. Part of the door had been painted and turned, and represented a sea-piece with the waves upside down; part of the cottage wall had been a terrace, interlaced with flowers; and there were shreds of gold from a pantomimic fairy bower standing near; and the lattice from which Phœbe Mayflower should

have looked through was unglazed, and made of rough laths, which, however well they appeared at a distance, were ridiculously unreal when seen too closely. "There," said Carew, laughing; "now is your illusion destroyed? Is this dirt, this apparent disorder, this tinsel, at all to your liking? Take my advice, and don't love the stage nor anything connected with it, except, perhaps, the noblest and the very best actors—and they are such rare birds that I need scarcely warn you against them."

"But," said Felix, "I have heard you speak of Shakspere as if he were a prophet."

"So he was," returned the author; "but one may admire the drama without loving the stage, just as one eats a pastry-cook's supper without inquiring too nearly into the ingredients."

Just as Felix was about to answer his friend, the prompter came and told George Carew that everything was ready in the green-room; and the author then explained to his young friend that, if he were very quiet and sat still, he should hear him read a new comedy, which had been accepted by the management, and in which Mrs. Buckingham and the other members of the corps dramatique would shortly appear; and, only too glad to see and hear something so novel, Felix hurried away, and found himself quietly seated in a corner, near a sallow young gentleman who employed himself for the most part in sucking the end of his cane.

The green-room of the Crow Street Theatre was large and commodious, with two very large looking-glasses at each end, and stuffed couches or rout-seats around it. But the papering, the hangings, and the gilding were shabby and

worn out; the striped satin of the couches was torn, greasy, and patched; and the carpet from the door to the fire-place was worn bare of pile or worsted by the hasty steps of the tragedians and comedians who came in to glance at themselves just as they were called.

In the centre of the room a table had been placed, and a decanter of water and a glass stood ready for the author, who was supposed to be overwhelmed with a modest thirst when reading his own work. Two candles illuminated the page of genius, as well as the gas lights, which burnt on each side of the looking-glasses, for the benefit of those who necessarily inspected themselves very frequently therein.

The actors and actresses were seated round the green-room, more than one of them looking at their watches, and expressing a not unnatural wish to be out of the theatre; and the lessee, a middle-aged gentleman with a bald head and a very mild expression in his eyes—neither of which prevented him from being a very queer customer indeed—was sitting down in earnest conversation with Mrs. Buckingham.

"Dear Mr. Carew," said that lady, stretching out a gloved hand in a very friendly manner, but without rising, "I hear you have a charming part for me. Now I hope I shall not be disappointed."

"Nor I," chimed in the second lady. And the rest of the company followed in chorus.

Carew, who was a man of few words, but whose manner was quite as charming as even that of Mrs. Buckingham, bowed politely, and, asserting plainly that he could say nothing of his own play but that Mr. Tottenham the lessee

had accepted it, sat down to the table, cleared his voice, and began reading.

It astonished Felix to find how eagerly everybody listened to the parts that he or she knew would fall to his or her share, and how careless they were of the caustic and clever writing which fell to the share of any other actor or actress. But this was no new thing to George Carew; and as he read very finely, and gave proper emphasis to every point, the comedy—one of modern life—appeared short and satisfactory, full of sharp hits and acute teachings to one person, who happened indeed to be the only one not personally interested in its success.

When the reading was concluded all the actors were silent. Mr. Tottenham, who had good taste, and had himself purchased the play, emitted certain murmurs of applause; then the general company applauded, and finally each actress and actor, Mrs. Buckingham leading off, commenced a series of particular deduction from the general merit of the piece, by which it would appear that the play, which a moment before had been charming and full of wit, was as full of faults as a poor piece well could be. Mrs. Buckingham hinted that her part, which was that of a young lady full of heart and of a romantic nature, opposed to the worldly counsels of her guardian, was not often enough on the stage, although there were very few scenes without her. Mr. Sterndale, the *premier jeune homme*, believed that his part was, on the contrary, the weakest; and the comic gentleman, who represented a bagman in the hardware line, who fell suddenly into a huge fortune—which in the end proved to belong to

Edith (Mrs. Buckingham)—asserted that he had not half enough to do or to say.

"Look here, Mr. Carew," said he, drawing the author skilfully away from the contending great ones. "Let me touch it up, you know; very prime it might be made. Let me get up a steeple-chase at Brummagem House—that's my new park, you know—and come in dressed as a jockey, walking with about four stone round my waist to get my weight down. A running patter up and down the stage, by me and a lot of my fine friends, all ready to eat me up for my money, would be a fine thing."

"I'll make a note of it," said Carew; "and, gentlemen and ladies, I must hurry away down to the office of the *Daily Censor;* if you don't be good I'll cut off all dramatic criticism for a fortnight at least. I will make notes of all your suggestions. Good morning."

"The parts will be copied out and delivered into your hands, ladies and gentlemen," said the lessee, "by Monday; we will rehearse the comedy, if you please, on the Wednesday following."

A general chorus of "Oh, Mr. Tottenham!" and a reference to study, then broke out amidst the departing company, when the author and his friend withdrew, not without over-hearing very vivid expressions from some who held minor characters, that the piece was "rot" *i.e.*, worth just nothing.

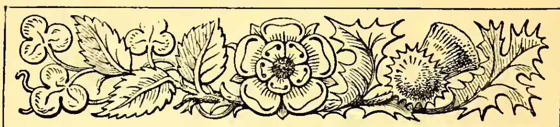
"Never mind *them*," said Carew; "they know nothing. An actor knows of the merit of a play about just as much as a publisher does of the merit of a book—and that amounts to little."

"But they pass their lives with plays and play-writers, in reading or producing dramatic works," urged Felix.

"That's just the reason why," said George Carew, as they emerged from the dark theatre and blinked at each other in the broad sunshine. "They have seen plays of which they thought little succeed; plays of which they thought nothing triumph; plays of which they were proud come to grief; and they only wonder, most likely, at the stupidity of the public, and caress their own wisdom more and more. When the public has pronounced its verdict unequivocally, then you will hear what the actors will say. If the play takes, Mrs. Buckingham will have always prophesied success, and Mr. Templemore will urge that his part was not a line too short nor too long."

"But what about that jockey? just like the fellow's impudence to suggest such folly to an author."

Carew laughed. "Oh my dear innocent young friend," said he; "ever since the days of Le Sage, and that famous scene in 'Gil Blas,' the author has been nothing, the actor something, *in* the theatre. Out of it the world speaks differently. And as for the public, I don't know whether to be angry with or laugh at it. From time immemorial it has suffered comic actors to do anything they like. Farce is always exceptional art, if art at all; Shakspere was led away by conventionalities, and no doubt put in much against the grain—that is, if his sweet and modest nature ever cared a pin for what he had produced, or for posthumous fame at all. But here am I near to my destination; I shall leave you to find your way home, and hope to meet you at Mr. Scumble's to-morrow. Till then, adieu."



## IN WHICH THE FRIENDS RESORT TO DINNER.

IN the best book which he has written—at least it is so in many respects—Mr. Thackeray, describing the warm criticism which F. Bayham produces in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, on the paintings of his friends, hints that it was somewhat too warm. Thus, when Clive gets his pictures exhibited for the first time—not his grand historical picture, but his simple sketches—F. B. shouts, *Io triumphe!* so loudly that all the world is made aware of the fact that Mr. Clive Newcome has got an admiring, if not a judicious friend, at his back. "F. Bayham's criticism on this performance," says the amiable satirist, surely writing of himself, for he had been educated as an artist, and had worked as an art critic, "it need not be said, was tremendous. Since the days of Michael Angelo you would have thought there never had been such drawings. In fact, F. B., as some other critics do, clapped his friends so boisterously on the back, and trumpeted their merits with such prodigious energy, as to make his friends themselves somewhat uneasy."

These remarks relate to the very warm and good-natured way in which a little essay, which Felix had been led to make, was received by his friends. He had jumped, as it were, at once to the dignity of an author; he found men who had won their spurs ready to listen to him, and after he had read his small paper, giving a sketch of something which he had seen, and introducing a character which he had observed, his friends were gracious in their praises. "'Pon my word," said Carew, pulling down one end of his moustache, "yours is a very pretty modest style, young fellow, and I know one or two publishers who ought to be ready to give you some money for your little amusements in that way. But I shall not encourage you. Don't turn author by profession. 'Tis an ignoble career for many of us."

"*You* ought not to say so," said Felix, firing up; "you, who have carried comfort, manly advice, honest thought, and religion without cant, into so many houses."

"Bravo! very much bravo!" echoed Scumble; "no profession *can* be ignoble that is nobly carried on. It is part of George's cant that he says so—not his own cant, but professional cant, which he has caught up and does not know how to get rid of. I wish he would not try to pass it off upon us, that's all."

"Truly it would be better," returned Felix; "only allow me to say that our friend has really none of that quality about him. What it is, is this: he has a quantity of humility inherent in him which *will* break out. He does not let it evaporate at the proper place, and therefore he vents it out of place now and then upon us."

"Do as you like with me, gentlemen; the rain has ceased, and I can escape from you," said the author.

"And the time *has* passed: it is five o'clock!" said Felix, with wonderment; "I must run home and have tea."

"Tea! why, we have not dined. Just take a cup with your wife and come back to my study. Wash and adorn yourself by putting on a clean collar; for a publisher has paid me some money for a second edition, and I am determined to stand treat. Come down to the Strand, you two, and we will have a little dinner, *chez* our German friend, Herr Kilner."

All the endeavours of Felix could not persuade Carew to forego his treat. George was one of those who, having made up their minds to anything, keep rigidly to it, and he took a pleasure in the society of Felix, and was glad to have him of his company. No wonder, then, that the latter yielded, and that in due time the three friends found themselves in the Strand, at the hospitable house of Mr. Kilner, a house which never refuses its harbour, and a very comfortable one it is, to people who have money to pay for it.

There are eating-houses in London in galore—plenty of houses to eat at, but little thereat to eat, if we credit some grumblers. There is the low eating-house, which has always an abundance of steam about it, and which boasts a great deal of pudding and vegetable, but very little meat; one of the mysteries of this class of house being, that the mutton bone, denuded of all the meat, which lies a ghastly object in the pewter dish, apparently projects as much steam as does the huge joint of beef which is formed of a dozen layers of fat

and lean cunningly skewered together, and which is never seen by any chance at a gentleman's table, but always on the counter of a cook-shop.

Before the windows of such an eating-house as this, hungry boys are seen flattening their turn-up and low-bred noses, poor things ! against the glass, apparently with but one desire in the world, which is, to be able to walk in and eat as much pudding as their elastic stomachs can contain. When the careful but too generous mechanic hurries to this shop about half-past twelve o'clock, he finds a little crowd of these children around the windows, and most likely relieves them, unless, indeed, he remembers that the boys are *habitués* of the grating, and gain their living by their hungry looks. Some of these restaurants tempt their customers by extraordinary advertisements. "A loaf of bread and a plate of leg-of-beef soup for fourpence," are freely offered ; and one proprietor gravely assures the public, in the most conspicuous type, that he will give the "Best dinner in London for ninepence." Not far from this enterprising man is one who offers the "Acre dinner for eightpence ;" for which small sum the less fastidious mechanics of somewhat small appetites may delight in a plate of meat, vegetables, pudding, and bread.

"Time was," said Carew, pointing out these places, with the cruel intention, as Felix averred, of taking away the appetites of his two friends, "when eightpence would have bought a large dinner in Long Acre for two authors. Dr. Johnson, indeed, learned to live on fourpence-half-penny a day; and do you recollect that famous dinner in the cellar—for they cooked and ate in cellars then—of Strap and Rode-

rick Random, and, moreover, the smoking ox cheek from the eating-house over the way, of Beau Tibbs, in Goldsmith's Essays?"

"Ay!" said Felix, "how delightful it is, when hungry, to call up visions of those feasts of which literature is only too full, from the suppers of Lucullus, given in the Apollo chamber, and those wild orgies described in Juvenal and Persius, to the little dinner at the Timmins's, described so well by Thackeray."

"Who knew how to feed," added Carew. "You have forgotten the feasts in Homer. The old boys knew that they must live to eat, though they did feed in rather a rough style."

"The feast which pleases me the best of all," said the artist, "is that grand one in the island of Barataria, in which poor Sancho's appetite is teazed by a hundred dainties of which he is not allowed to taste one. Imagine, if you can," continued Scumble, laughing, "one's own state under the same circumstances."

"He admires that episode," urged George Carew, "because in a score of Academy exhibitions he has seen it painted. But I confess it is a rich scene which can scarcely be done justice to. Poor Sancho, after having been denied fruit and fish, fixes on a dish of roast partridges, which he fancies can do him no manner of harm. 'Hold!' cries the doctor, 'my lord governor shall not eat them while I live to prevent it.' 'Why not?' cries Sancho. 'Because,' rattles the doctor, 'our great Northern star of medicine, Hippocrates, says, "*Omnis saturatio mala, perdicis autem pessima*,"' and away the partridges fly."

"But partridges were not for him," said Felix, taking up the

theme, and, fresh from the Quixote, thereby enabled to compete with the extensive memory of George Carew. "He was not disappointed so much by their loss as of that of the olla-podrida. 'What think you, master doctor,' cries he, 'of that huge dish smoking hot, which I take to be an olla-podrida? for among the many things contained in that mass I may be sure to light upon something toothsome.'"

"A good sentiment," said George, "like that of the Scotsman, who said a sheep's head was a confused mass of good eating. What says the governor to the olla-podrida, young one? you have it all at your fingers' ends."

"'*Absit!*' cries the doctor, 'far be such a thought from us! Olla-podrida! there is no worse dish in the world; leave them to prebends and rectors of colleges, or lusty feeders at country weddings; but let them not be seen on the tables of governors.'"

"Ah, what rich humour Cervantes had!" interrupted Carew; "how gentle and how genial too! We laugh at the passages now, but let us imagine the writer in his gloomy prison, shattered in health, neglected, with little hope, and with two grim companions, old age and poverty, and we shall the better appreciate the noble heroism of the man. But, hallo! here we are at Herr Kilner's, and in capital time. At six o'clock he has a fresh relay of hot joints; let us enter, and may good digestion wait on appetite."

An officious waiter who knew Carew took the small party under his immediate protection, and ushered them at once to a small reserved table, which was made gay by the most neatly folded and snowy of napkins, and the most rosy pink of hock glasses. Carew called for the *carte* and studied it,

and resolved to commence, after consultation with his own mind, with clear soup, to be followed by salmon, and accompanied with still hock.

In the meantime, Felix had leisure to study the room.

Our guests had entered by a wide side-door way, in which were fresh evergreens; but Kilner's establishment was plainly attached to a public-house or tavern. It may be that the ingenious German, finding many come to his house to dine, had supplemented the tavern by building a big room over a stable yard, and supplying the few guests he had. But, having done this thoroughly well, his business had increased until a second saloon, and a smoking-room all gaily set out, but somewhat close and stuffy, were hardly enough to contain the diners, eaters, and even the *viveurs* who came down expressly to have a good dinner.

Lighted by a lantern at the top, the sides of the square saloon were covered with large pictures by third-rate painters, which Kilner had evidently picked up cheaply, but which were very much better than the ordinary paintings seen in the houses of rich men. In the middle of the room stood a sturdy carver, stout but pale, as if all ruddiness had been steamed out of him, and before him, on a dinner-wagon, a small table on wheels almost as large as a dinner plate, was a handsome plated dish-cover, under which smoked a fine sirloin of beef. When one of the *convives* desired some of this joint, the table was wheeled to his side, and the carver, with the artistic ease which only long practice can give, cut him his portion as deftly as if he understood how much he could eat to a grain.

" You will observe," said George, " how clever the fellow is.

There is great art in carving; that is why our young men will not undertake it. But you should have seen my dad, sir; he was an English gentleman, of the time when a gentleman sat at the head of his table and served his guests; not when you dine *à la Russe*, and a waiter rushes up with a joint of a fowl badly prepared and half cold, and with all the toothsomeness evaporated. Give me the old school. A man should sit at the head of his table. I don't know what the present age is coming to; it is abdicating all its duties, and will bring us to a pretty pass at last."

"Bother the present age, you old fogey, you," said Scumble, who had been making furtive attacks on his bread. "Here comes the clear soup; say your grace to yourself, and fall to."

Before the salmon was despatched, a young gentleman of six-and-twenty came into the room, whom Carew summoned at once by knocking so sharply on the table that all the other customers looked up. For at Kilner's silence is respectfully demanded, and, with the exception of a low buzz and a laugh from some of the young fellows, when the wine is not only good—that it always is—but abundant, one might fancy that they were dining alone.

When this young gentleman saw George, he rushed to him, and shook him by the hand with that warmth of feeling which almost all Carew's friends exhibited towards him, and, Carew having pressed him, he took up the fourth and empty chair and joined the party, absorbing so much of his friend's attention and conversation that Felix began to feel a little jealous.

"Now," said Carew. "I am happy. You're just the fellow I wanted, Corner; I think I have introduced you to Scumble before."

"Oh yes," said the stranger, "Mr. Scumble the artist, whose works I so often see noticed in the papers?"

"Exactly," rejoined Carew, as the two shook hands; "and a better fellow does not exist in the world, except he sits there."

He pointed out Felix, who blushed and sniggered with his usual superabundant modesty.

"Let me introduce you two; you ought to like each other, and will do so."

"We have evidently a point of attraction in you, George," said the stranger, reading in the open eyes of Felix the friendship that he felt, and liking the young man before he knew him. "I have no doubt that I and your friend will be delighted with each other if you say——"

"Cease your funning; here comes your clear soup. Mr. Felix Straightways, as you are the oldest inhabitant of this table, let me give you the precedence, and present to you a dear friend of mine, Dr. Julius Corner, formerly house surgeon at St. Barnabas Hospital, and consulting physician of some other place, when he looked such a boy that his patients had no confidence in him."

"They ought to have now, then," said Felix, shaking hands with him.

"Go on with the soup, doctor, and catch us up. Waiter, another bottle of this hock, and put the sparkling in ice; bring that up with the haunch. Now," turning to the doctor, "I

will do all the talking," continued Carew; "*je commence être un père gris*, as they say in that detestable lingo over the water—I have had my tongue oiled. Our friend Corner, not only a surgeon, but one who has taken his degree, finding that he could not find sufficient credence in London, has fled to Stoney-Mudborough, in the county of Carrotshire, and there practises on the *dura corpora* of the chaw-bacons."

"Detestable Cockney," said the doctor, drinking to his friend. "The fact is, George, you don't know all. I am settled in practice, and, to give myself stability and position, I am married to——"

"The sweetest, prettiest,—we'll spare the rest; but we will drink the bride's health in moselle," cried Carew.

"At my expense," said the doctor.

"Not a bit of it," interrupted Carew; "I, sir, am the Lucullus of the day."

And so, with friendly jest and joke, the dinner passed off, and when the young fellows adjourned to a private smoking-room, and sat comfortably down to coffee and cigars, Carew found very little difficulty in persuading his guests—as he had proved by demonstration—that there is at least one eating-house in London where you can get an excellent dinner, notwithstanding that the *carte* is not so extensive as at the "Trois Frères," or even at Voisin's, in Paris, and the five hundred letters of complaint, from men who want two pounds of rump steak and potatoes for sixpence, to the contrary.

"The fact is, London, if you know it well, is the cheapest and best place for a dinner of any kind in the world. And

now, doctor, as you are under a promise, tell us how it is that you have fallen into the toils of wedlock."

As nothing in the world makes people so intimate as a good dinner, Dr Corner, having bound Carew by a heavy promise, strengthened by a fine, not to interrupt him, commenced his story, which will be found in the following chapter.

## THE DOCTOR'S STORY.

HE four friends having settled themselves very comfortably in their easy chairs, and enjoying their cigars, Dr. Corner commenced by laying down his cigar and taking a modest sip of coffee; then, looking chiefly at his old friend George Carew, thus began:—

"I had passed the College, and 'walked,' as we then termed it, the hospital, but was not quite old enough to practise. However, as soon as I was of the required age, up I went, with a very juvenile appearance, and, doubtless, considerably more confidence than I should now feel, for my examination. Old Cutler, senior surgeon at St. Barnabas, who principally took me in hand, gave me some stiff questions, but was now and then pleased to look over the top of his spectacles and emit a grunt of satisfaction at my answers. When everything was over, and my mouth was very dry with a fever of anxious expectation, and my face, of an unusual pallor, expressed a clammy dew, the stern Cutler demanded how old I was.

"'Twenty-two,' I said, eagerly.

"'Umph!' said he. 'And how long have you been twenty-two?'—this almost incredulously.

"'Since eight o'clock yesterday evening,' I returned, to convey conviction, as it were, by descending to particulars.

"'That will do,' said he, with a grim smile. 'You ought to make a very fair practitioner, for you have been eager enough to get into practice. Go: you are licensed to slay.'

"My next object was to make a practice. I determined not to buy one, but to work myself into position and fame. I had a great idea of fame. I dreamt of all the best doctors in the county, containing the village where I shortly set up, failing to cure Lord Demilion, the great man of the neighbourhood; and of my being sent for in a hurry, seeing the case at a glance, ridiculing the diagnosis of my brethren, who stood paralysed at my boldness, resorting to something exceedingly desperate, effecting a wonderful cure, and living for ever on the reputation made by it. Of course I dreamt I became physician ordinary and extraordinary to the great Demilion family; that Demilion asserted publicly that he never could have lived without me, nor would ever let me live more than a mile away from his park; that the *Lancet* had reported the whole of the case, and that the senior surgeon at the Hôtel Dieu, in Paris, had turned yellow with envy when he heard that the gold medal, the great prize for surgery, was to be sent to me, an unknown rival, and, oh, horror! an Englishman!

"Ah! what wild dreams we have! I didn't know the precise form that mine assumed, but fancy that one of these forms—the instance of my great cure—took the shape of trepanning. 'My lord,' I dreamt I said to Demilion, a thin,

melancholy, and very rich seigneur, who had read all the encyclopædists so assiduously that he was attacked with brain fever—he was supposed to be in a rational state between the paroxysms of madness—'the only way effectually to cure you is to take off the top of the cranium, and remove a portion of your lordship's too exuberant and lively brain.' My rivals turned blue with horror at such a proposal. 'And,' muttered his lordship, with extreme feebleness, 'what will be the consequence if I refuse?' 'My lord,' I (imagined that I) returned boldly, 'I cannot answer for the consequences; or rather I can.' Here I took out my watch. 'In two hours, thirty-seven minutes, and twenty seconds your lordship will breathe your last.' His lordship smiled with the resignation of a philosopher. 'Send for Mr. Capias,' said he; 'he is in waiting, and has my will ready executed. I wish to attest it before I submit. Young man, Napoleon won the bridge of Lodi when a mere lad; he was a youth, but he was bold. Into your hands, bold like him, I commit myself——'

"His lordship did not finish the sentence, because the next moment he was in a fit of raving madness. I saw there was not a moment to be lost. I turned out Mr. Capias, forced my terrified brethren to strap his lordship down, gave him a huge dose of laudanum—ether as an anæsthetic was not then known—and in ten minutes his lordship's scalp was removed, and his head relieved of the top of the cranium, and a few ounces of brain. In a fortnight afterwards his lordship was walking about in his right mind, or rather the best *part* of his mind. All the indigestible notions of D'Alembert and Diderot seemed happily to have been removed with

the portion of brain I took away. Lord Demilion led a reformed life, and busied himself, not in sneering at other people's religion, but in exhibiting his own. He built a church, schools, cottages for the poor, and——

"I had got just so far in my dream. I need not say that it was a dream, and that I never gained the Demilion connection at all, nor, in fact, a single patient worth five pounds a-year in that pretty, lonely, and exceedingly healthy village I set up in, when an old woman, half-drudge and wholly the post-woman of the village, brought me word that I was wanted.

"'Not at Demilion Park,' said I, with a bitter smile, for, awaking from my day-dream, I had felt disappointed at the blank reality.

"'Noa,' returned the withered, brown, healthy, absurdly healthy old creature, who had probably never taken a pill or had the headache in her life—'Noa, Dr. Corner, na such luck for a young 'un. It be a Parson Williams as wants you; he's very bad, poor man." Thus saying, the post-woman vanished.

"'Parson Williams?' said I. 'These people call every local preacher a parson, and, egad, every quack a doctor! There's no luck for me; it is not even the clergyman who is ill.' I put on my hat in a huff, and went on to Mr. Williams's house.

"It was at the end of the village — uptown, as the inhabitants called it—and a quaint, pretty, but bare enough little residence it was. The road, branching off into two divisions, had left a triangular bit of common, a sort of no-man's-land, which some bold adventurer, with not the slightest right on his side, had seized, and stuck thereon

a pedlar's shop. That speedily changed into a butcher's, then became deserted and a nuisance to the village; then the Wesleyans opened the shop to preach in it, and at last railed in the space and erected a plain, barn-like chapel, at the back of which was a structure, rather like a large washhouse than a small residence, but which contained four rooms, and was the local preacher's habitation.

"To the door of this little house I, Julius Corner, Doctor of Medicine and Licentiate of the Apothecaries' Hall, at school known as J. Corner, and more frequently as Jack Horner, did apply the handle of my worn gingham umbrella rather forcibly, as is the manner of us doctors—a manner assumed probably with a view of making our patients satisfied with our presence and of readjusting their nerves.

"'Is Mr. Williams to be seen?' I asked. 'I am——'

"'Dr. Corner,' said a sweet voice, as the sweetest of visions seemed to stand before me, 'my father will be glad to see you.'

"'Her father! goodness gracious!' thought I to myself; 'fancy an old local preacher having such a daughter!' She stood there, just aside to permit me to enter the narrow and small hall, with her pretty eyes turned towards mine, a look of anxious hope on her face, her white throat poised upon her beautiful shoulders, and surrounded with a frill of blue silk ribbon, the trimming of her dress, which was worn close and high. The deep blue of her eyes matched the ribbon very nicely, and set off by contrast the rose colour of her cheeks, and the warm, red brown of her hair. She seemed to be an artist in colour, for

everything she wore always fell into its due contrast or harmony. So, too, she seemed always to be graceful in her movements; and, had it not been for her extreme unaffectedness and simplicity, she would have appeared to have studied all her attitudes, they were so graceful. Her chin was round, and just sufficiently prominent, her upper lip of the true shape, and beautifully and palely red, while the lower was fuller and redder. When she smiled, which she did readily at my awkward and intense gaze, she gave a peculiar sweetness to her whole face, which smiled all over, dimpled cheeks, blue eyes, mouth and all. The sight of her was to me something so pleasant that when she spoke again I fancied a long interval of time must have elapsed since I first saw her.

"'He is in the parlour,' she said, leading the way.

"Well, the illness of Mr. Williams was not much, but it was obstinate; it arose, I fancy, from the depressed views he took of religion and life, and from a greal deal of pride, long suppressed, and most conscientiously kept down, and wounded, perhaps, by his position or his poverty. He was a good man, and had manfully struggled with his faults, trying to carry out the true views of religion, with regard to his failing, in the right way. Happily, when I saw my patient, I took a more practical and scientific diagnosis of his case than I did of that of my Lord Demilion in my waking dream; I talked cheerfully to him, told him that I would get him well enough for prayer-meeting on Sunday, and, writing out a prescription, called in Miss Williams to give her my directions.

"'You will send your servant to N——,' said I, 'for this prescription, for the village apothecary will not be good enough;' I mentioned a town some six miles off—'and tell the servant——'

"'I am the servant,' she said simply, and with a smile; 'I can get some of our neighbours to stay in the house, and will walk over.'

"'Nay, if that is all,' said I, feigning occupation—for it is incumbent on all doctors to seem busy—'I have to go to N—— myself; I will see it made up and send it to you. That disposes of that.'

"'You will mind the written directions,' I continued; 'and when Mr. Williams awakes in the night, it is incumbent that he should take his medicine; but tell the nurse not to wake him.'

"'I am the nurse,' she added, with equal sweetness and simplicity; 'local preachers in our community are not very rich, and my father can hardly maintain me, much less a servant.'

"'And a very good thing too,' said I, with surprise, speaking cheerfully, though in answer to a look of pain from the sick man; 'when you want a thing done, do it yourself; I am sure my boy breaks as many bottles as he delivers; I hope he won't break the one which I send you.'

"'What a wonderful creature this is!' said I, inwardly; 'how beautifully clean all things look! how bright is that old desk, and there is not a spot of dust on the preacher's books;' I glanced at a huge 'Matthew Henry,' which, side

by side with a folio 'Baxter,' a 'Toplady,' and the 'Ductor Dubitantium' of Jeremy Taylor, encumbered the table and desk of the Reverend Mr. Williams.

"'I wonder what her name is?' thought I to myself, after I had bidden her good-bye. 'Here, what a pretty fellow am I, dreaming of becoming head-physician to the court, and in half an hour afterwards falling in love with the daughter of a Dissenting minister, who is at the same time servant-of-all-work and head-nurse to her father. But then, what a pretty creature she is!'

"Suffice it to say that my selfish considerations about the lowliness of Miss Prudentia Williams—her father called her 'Prue'—did not last long. I called next day, having manfully walked to N——, and got my own prescription made up, and then went to my patient's house to see how far he had amended. I found him rather worse; but I put a bold face on the matter, and told him that we doctors always thought that a little relapse after the first visit was a good sign. Miss Prue opened her pretty round eyes upon me with implicit belief—a simple credence on her part which made me very much ashamed of myself. I entered into conversation with the young lady, and found her excellently well read in English literature, preferring Shakspere's 'Tempest,' Goldsmith's 'Vicar,' and Dr. Johnson's 'Rasselas,' to all other books. I heard incidentally that at music she was a proficient; but there was no sign of a piano in the enlarged laundry in which she and her father were living. When I purposely made a small excursion into French literature, Miss Prue was equally at home there, and capped a quotation of mine from the

'Malade Imaginaire;' nay, I found that she understood the simple Latin, or Anglicised Latin, of my prescriptions well enough, by reading that barbarous jargon which we leeches are not ashamed to put as directions after our prescriptions.

"'Where can she have got all this?' thought I. 'Ah! I see: the father is a learned man—a man much beyond his sphere, poor fellow!'

"I was not very wrong there. Mr. Williams had, many years ago, with a favourite sister, taken to the Wesleyan Connexion from earnest religious conviction, and separated himself from his family and from brilliant prospects. It was, however, not to him that pretty little Prue owed her accomplishments. While the brother, earnest in the ministry, and careless of worldly advancement, was moving about from station to station, and mission to mission, Miss Williams, his sister, herself very highly educated, had opened a school for the daughters of Nonconformists, in which, after due time, she had educated her niece, the only child of her brother, who, after a short marriage, had been left a widower. Good as the preacher was, earnest, noble, and thoroughly imbued with a Christian spirit, the rough, rude, and often selfish manners of his flock hurt him exceedingly. Poor people! although they knew it not, he had given up all for them; and the narrowness and meanness with which they — or, say, only some of them — treated their local preachers affected more than one of them—nay, wounded them to the death. 'It was just the same with Father Wesley,' he once said to me, with a faint smile; 'that saint, who rode, perhaps, fifty miles to preach to the poor

people in Cornwall, had often to lie on his saddle-bags in a loft, and had hard matter to get corn for his horse.'

"'Too true, poor papa!' said Prue, sadly; 'but we are better off, are we not? Here, Mrs. Boughton has sent you three pots of black-currant jam!'

"'And,' said I, 'your house is small, but very neat and elegant.' I glanced round at the furniture and at some good china vases and well-bound books that decorated the parlour, which was dining-room, study, drawing-room, boudoir, and breakfast-room to their little house.

"'Ah!' said the local preacher, turning his white head towards the vases on the mantel-shelf, and looking at them fondly, 'I did not think that I should have ever loved the perishing things of this world so much as I do those bits of china. They belonged to my dear sister, who is now in heaven.'

"'That I am sure she is,' said Prue, blithely, with a kind, beaming smile on her face. 'Dear aunt! she indeed was all the world to me; but I would not call her back from that blessed home for worlds. Yes, Doctor, you are quite right; it is a pretty little house. Papa used to quote Herrick's verses about it—written, too, on his own parsonage:—

> '"Lord thou hast given me to dwell,
> A little cell!
> A little cell whose humble roof
> Is water proof!"

And so ours is. It is very compact, is it not, Dr. Corner? so compact that dear papa dares not to smoke his pipe

when he composes his sermons, because he is afraid of perfuming the chapel. He is like Dr. Parr, you know, and many other sound divines, and loves his pipe of tobacco.'

"'Dear me!' said I to myself, rubbing my eyes, 'here is a minister's daughter quoting Herrick, citing Dr. Parr, and calling tobacco a perfume. What comes next?' I had fixed my eyes so fondly and admiringly on those of Miss Prue—and I am afraid that my eyes held a language of their own that I could not prevent their using—that the young lady slowly let hers fall, and, with a little sigh, said, 'And what are you thinking of, Doctor?' We had become quite intimate, I and this family; and I spent more time with my first and principal patient than I should have done elsewhere, had I been in better practice. Miss Prue's question puzzled me.

"'I was thinking,' said I, with a smile and a blush, 'that you are quite a character, Miss Prue. I wonder what a phrenologist would say of you?' I blundered this out more as an apology than anything else.

"'Oh, I can tell you,' she said, with a lively little curtsy. 'To amuse papa once, and, indeed, to carry out his wishes——'

"'You see, Doctor,' said Mr. Williams, 'phrenology is an interesting study, though medical men give it little credit; and, wishing to know in what direction Prue's education should be forwarded, I consulted a very clever manipulator, but rather an illiterate fellow, poor man! as you will see, about Prue's bumps. I dare say she has got the paper; we seldom forget anything which relates to ourselves, especially if we be women.'

"'Thank you, papa dear,' said Prue; 'you are getting better, I see. Now, after that, dare I show Dr. Corner my character?'

"'Oh, pray do, said I, getting interested; 'papa only means a bit of fun. I am a believer in phrenology myself, and am a devoted student of it. I should like to see whether the gentleman and I agree in our estimate.'

"'Oh!' said Prue, 'you have estimated me, have you? Well, you shall see, Doctor; only, remember, this gentleman, whom everybody said was really clever at his practice, could not spell very well. He travelled about from place to place with a hideous collection of plaster casts of heads, of which no one ever could tell the philosopher from the murderer. I remember papa thought there was a startling likeness between Demosthenes, the orator, and Courvoisier, who murdered Lord William Russell. Perhaps he had labelled them wrongly, papa dear; but no, that could not be, because the names were cut deeply in the plaster. However, here is my character.' Prue had been turning over a few papers in her desk, and brought out a piece of coarse paper, neatly folded and very badly written upon, as follows; the spelling and the numbers, which refer to some chart of the operator, I imagine, are as they say in the newspapers, 'his own.'

"'22. Why does he begin at 22, Miss Prue?' said I; 'that surely could not have been your age.'

"'Well,' she answered, 'that is a leading question, Doctor. It was not my age. That was written just two years ago, when I was exactly eighteen years of age. Go on reading.'

"I obeyed with a pleased smile. 'Only twenty!' I thought; 'just the age for my wife.'

"'The character of Miss Prudentea Williams examined by me, Francis Blank, Finoligest.' [He certainly has an original way of spelling.]

"'22. You are very affectshunate.

"'24. Very attashed to childrin.

"'18. [He is going backward.] Full of controll of youreselfe.

"'26. [Forward again.] Devoated to friends.

"'14. Not fond of eating and drinking.'

"'That is a consideration, Miss Prue,' said I, 'for your future husband, in these dear times. I think the Finoligest an honest fellow.'

"'Go on, sir,' returned Prue, archly, 'and leave your remarks till the paper is concluded.'

"'15. Not too much enigy.

"'10. But not distructive.

"'You are fond of keeping secrets.

"'18. [Why, that's the second 18!] Rather fond of money, for money's worth.

"'18. Considerably fond of making things.

"' 4. You think next to nothing of yourselfe.'

"'Then that's very bad taste on your part,' I interpolated, *sotto voce*. Prue said nothing, but gave me a gracious smile, with just the slightest tinge of deprecation in it.

"'23. Like people for to prayse you.

"'10. Not generally benev'lent.

"'22. Because you are so carefull.

"' 9. Fond of musick.

"' 8. A great deal of language.

"'18. You like to go to church sometimes. Your ven'ration is about fayre.

"'18. Your firmness is also fayre.

"'22. You are uncommon conscientious.

"'20. You are also soon surprized.

"'24. Also you are rather wittey.'

"'Really,' said I, laughing heartily at the queer document, 'the man, I suppose, was an enthusiast in the science; for, in spite of his defective education, he could not have given you a character more close to the truth. There are higher qualities, Miss Williams,' I said, gravely, as I rose, 'which quite escape the phrenologist. These arise from duties well performed, and from the characteristics of our mental organization being well seconded by principle——'

"'Or by the grace of God,' said the preacher, solemnly. 'We map our heads, and offer to lay down our little laws for the conduct of life, and we forget the great Director, who can give firmness to a broken reed and holy strength to those who are weak of purpose.'

"'Amen,' said Prue, solemnly. She had a natural love and veneration for her father, although the 'Finoligest' had given her but a moderate inclination to 'go to church,' and she was of a prayerful, religious nature, as I well knew. The fact was, I was in love with this girl. Never had I seen so simple, so dear, so generous a character united to so much modesty, capacity, and beauty. As for Mr. Francis Blank, 'Finoligest,' I became at once a convert both to the science and to the extraordinary insight of the practitioner.

"My own practice did not, however, prosper. My patient was getting rapidly well—an effect due, as I humbly con-

ceive, not to my physic so much as to the love and interest which his rough flock exhibited towards their pastor, and to a visit which I persuaded the rector—a man of high family, and a ripe and good scholar—to pay him as we walked home together from the sick-bed of my second patient, a villager.

"'A very good man, that Mr. Williams,' said the parson, who, far above the little jealousies which might exist in the village, always followed out his own good impulses. 'I will go and see him at once. The Wesleyans are our brothers. John Wesley always believed himself in our community, and urged his flock to go to their parish church two or three times a year.'

"'Mr. Williams is a scholar and a gentleman,' said I, 'and you will be gratified with his conversation.'

"'Very good, Doctor,' returned the parson—a stalwart, jolly, squire-like looking man, who did an immense deal of good in his own manly, brusque way—'I'll come.'

"And come he did, greatly to Prue's delight, and to the comfort of her father, who put on his courtliest manners, and delighted the rector.

"As Mr. Williams was fast passing out of my governance, and I should shortly be obliged to discontinue my visits, I determined, after a sleepless night, to say what I might in my own favour to Miss Williams. Little Prue, as her father fondly called her, had become all the world to me. Her words, her smiles, her patronage, were of more importance than that of my Lord Demilion, or the whole houseful of hereditary legislators. I found out that single doctors were not so successful as married ones, and that, in fact, I wanted a wife most desperately. So it was that I managed to get

Miss Prue—as the enlarged wash-house was by far too small to be the scene of such an offer as that of my heart—to call for some soothing medicine for her father at my house, a very humble, but, in comparison with her house, a perfectly palatial, residence. When there, with many struggles to keep my courage to the sticking-place, I determined to ask her to be my wife.

"After receiving the medicine, my dear little sweetheart wished to hurry away, although I pressed her to stay one minute, and even offered to walk home with her to her father's. But little Prue's delicacy became alarmed: she could not stay, she said; and as for walking down the village with me, that she could not think of doing. She was hurrying to the door, when my changed and earnest voice arrested her, and I begged her to come for one moment to the parlour. I offered her a chair, and stood up before her, looking at her changing colour and her pretty, wondering eyes.

"'My dear Miss Williams,' said I gravely, 'I believe that I love you as no man ever before loved you. I tell you this plainly, because I am sure that it would be useless for me to try to conceal it. I have seen your goodness to your father, your sweet temper under trial, your watchfulness, your calmness, and patience——'

"Prue had covered her eyes with her hands, and, greatly to my surprise, I saw, by the tears which came slowly through her fingers, was crying. I continued: 'I am but a poor fellow myself, Miss Williams, and am half-ashamed to offer myself to you. I am no fit mate for one so beautiful; but if the devotion of a life can repay you, I can promise you

that from my soul.' I had fallen on one knee before the creature I loved so much, and tried to take one of her hands. She gave me both, and looked at me with such sad eyes, so bright and lustrous with recent weeping, that I feared greatly, and turned pale with anxiety. 'What,' thought I, 'was the stiffest examination conducted by the grim old Senior Surgeon Cutler to this?'

"The thin transparent eyelids shut themselves tightly down over the pretty eyes, and then, with an evident effort, Miss Prue spoke. Her words fell as softly, as coldly, and as distinctly as snow-flakes at the slow commencement of a heavy fall.

"'My dear doctor—I will say my dear friend—I am so much obliged to you for your love, your devotion—I return your love; I do indeed, but as a sister.' I had put up my hand to take hers at the beginning of the slow, sad speech, but she prevented me with a gesture. 'As a sister, Dr. Corner; it can be nothing more—for———' Here she paused, and then said firmly, 'for ever. You must not ask me any reasons; you must not press me any further; as a man of honour, which I know you are, you must give up all pursuit of me. I feel you have done me a great honour, which, indeed, I hardly deserve; but it is best, it is bravest, to tell you at once that what you wish can never be.'

"My head was bent down as she said these cold words. A white hand was put before my lips to kiss, and in a moment as I remained there stupified and frozen into dumbness, little Prue—I beg her pardon, Miss Prudentia Williams—had passed from the room.

"How long I so remained I can hardly say. When I

sprang up I was full of an intense shame and rage—shame felt for myself and rage for her. 'Oh !' said I, bitterly, 'I am not good enough for her ! She wants some one more rich and accomplished than a village doctor. She has tastes beyond her sphere; and, as lowliness is young ambition's ladder, may dream of his lordship in the big park just by. King Corphetua wooed a beggar-maid. Why should not Lord Demilion—he is a learned, well-read man—marry this pearl of daughters of a local preacher? Why not, indeed ! What a fool was I to be led away with her innocence and beauty? *She* love ! *She* can never love ! She has got no soul in that beautiful body.'

"Thus I troubled and fretted myself. It is not a pleasant thing to be rejected; it finds out the weakest part of one's pride; for, however good we are, we men think that we offer a great prize to a woman when we offer her ourselves. However it was, I was so tormented with my love and with Miss Prue's refusal, that I could not rest. I wandered about my small room like an animal in a cage. I felt wounded, humiliated at first, and then a gleam of hope sprang up in my bosom. After all did this woman reject me because she could not love me? or was there some mysterious barrier between us? She had spoken so solemnly, 'It can never be.' What was it? She should at least tell me that. Then a sudden impulse came upon me, and I determined to seek an interview with her father, whom, by the way, I thought I might have spoken to at first. He at least should explain the mystery to me.

"Fired by this new resolution, I put my hat on and sought the village. I could not rest under my rejection. I determined

to know all, and if the barriers were, as I had been told, impassable; if she loved another—here a sickly, cold tremor passed ever me—I would strike my little camp, and seek refuge in London, and there devote my life to my profession.

"So I strode on. Recent rain had softened the earth, and the air smelt fresh and balmy: but the wind had risen, and was noisily careering over the hedges and through the trees. The weather suited my frame of mind; and, closely buttoned up, and eager and resolute, I soon reached the cottage. Sheltered by some large trees, the few shrubs round the chapel were still enough, and I unlatched the gate wherein the small congregation were wont to enter, and came to the side of the chapel, thus entering the cottage, from some secret impulse, some sense of repulse and degradation, unseen.

"It was well that I did so.

"The door was open, and, standing in the little hall, pausing ere I knocked at the half-opened door, I heard sounds of weeping. Little Prue appeared to be kneeling before her father, who was sitting in his easy chair, and apparently comforting her. 'You have done well, my child,' he said; 'I can trust the impulses of your heart, so tender and so true——'

"'Tender and true!' I muttered, grinding my teeth in sarcastic agony.

"'And yet so wise for its age, poor little heart! poor heart!'

"'And yet he loves me, father; he spoke so earnestly, so fondly. We know how good, how simple he is. It is better thus for him to bear the first shock; he will soon get over it, and will win some happier heart, some one better than

I am——' Here was a fresh flood of tears, and the father again spoke to comfort her: 'No, no one better, Prue, I am sure; you are the best judge of your way in life, my child, though I could have well liked this amiable young man, who is clever, too, and may rise——'

"'Ah! but father, father,' said Prue, 'think of yourself, growing old and lonely in your poverty, worn-out with fatigue and work, and none to help you.'

"'None, save the Lord, my child,' returned the old preacher, reverently.

"'Think,' she said, rapidly giving utterance to her full heart, 'of the poverty we have had to endure, think of the trials and the want since aunt died; could you endure this again, alone? would you have this heightened by me away from you, and having, perhaps, the same struggle to go through with a husband, and, it may be, little ones? a husband upon whose advancement I should be a burden and a heavy drag, upon whose bright career I should be a blot. I could not bear it, father, indeed I could not. I have seen too much trial with you to endure it with *him*, or to drag him into it; for I love him, father, indeed I do; I love him in his goodness, in his nobleness, in his loneliness, and in this bitter trial I love him with all my heart.'

"The tears—tears of joy—which had been running very quickly and silently down my face, gave a sudden gush, when Miss Prue, having finished her confession, laid her head upon her father's knee, and burst out into a good cry. I don't think, as a rule, that crying is a pretty noise; but I was never so much delighted with any prima donna, warbling the divinest *aria* in the world, as I was with that burst of sobbing,

'*con spirito*,' as they write on the music, of dear little Prue's. In a moment I was in the parlour, and, hugely to the surprise of old Mr. Williams, I was down on my knees before him, with my arm round his daughter's neck. She didn't seem so much astonished as he was, but suffered it to lie there while I said—

"'My dear, dear, dearest Prue, that is all a mistake of yours which you just now told me up at the surgery. Your father knows all about it, so I need not tell him. But when you rejected me, simply because you would have spared me because of my poverty, you jumped to a conclusion not warranted by facts.'

"Here little Prue dried her eyes, and looked up into my face with a puzzled, pleased smile.

"'Not warranted by facts,' I repeated. 'I am not a poor man; I am rather a rich one. I had romantic notions of making a business, and depending upon my own exertions; I detested the trick some doctors have of making a show, and I made none, not even a red lamp. I made a vile choice in coming to a village where all the inhabitants are impertinently healthy. But I made a good choice in coming to find you, my darling. I have just five thousand pounds in the funds; 'tis not much, but a fifth of that will buy a good connection in London, or where you will, and the rest can remain where it is. And now I am not going to give you a chance to refuse me again; not a bit of it.' (Prue put up one little white hand deprecatingly.) 'I will ask your father, as I should have done at first. Will you, dear sir, knowing all that has passed between us, give me your daughter?'

"'My children,' said the old preacher, with a smile of

happiness—and in a moment Prue was in my arms, and with her own around my neck.

"In the course of that evening I had recourse to Prue's desk: it was one of the worldly goods that I claimed of her for a certain purpose; I tyrannically claimed it, and she yielded submissively. 'Here it is,' said I, reverently, putting aside her letters, and taking the coarsely-written paper, 'here is all I want, madam: you may keep the rest. Mr. Francis Blank is the finest Finilogest in the world; for, if it had not been for that quality he so well delineates, I should not have been one quarter so happy as I am now; indeed I could not be happier, and I owe it all, dear Prue, to that one fine and rare quality. Here it is, marked No. 4 on the chart: "You think next to nothing of YOURSELF," and therefore WE—I took her father's hand as I spoke, and, placing my arm round her waist, drew her towards us—therefore we, my darling wife, think everything of you.'"

# CRITICAL OPINIONS.

WHEN the story was concluded, Dr. Julius Corner, the narrator, who looked rather red, and was otherwise not unmoved, lighted another cigar, and cleared his throat, hoarse with emotion as well as talking, with a deep and long application to a glass of cold spring water. "There is nothing like it after all, George," he said; "I am gradually approaching teetotalism myself."

"We usually do after a good dinner and some choice wines. I don't know anything which heightens beauty so much as contrast," said Cimabue, with a whiff. "By St. Vincent de Paul, that's a pretty story of yours, though. How much reality exceeds fiction! does it not, George?"

"Say nothing about it, sir," said Carew; "I am laying by all those little incidents for a work of fiction upon which I am engaged, and to-morrow, if you like, I will with pleasure tell you one story, or rather read it to you, and then you can measure fiction and reality if you like."

This he said with a smile, and a burlesque daring quite unnatural to him; for George was one of the most modest of

authors—a modest enough race, too, when of any worth. Then, striking a bell, he summoned the waiter and paid the bill, and as he linked his arm with the Doctor's, as the whole party walked with him towards a newspaper office, he poured forth such a eulogium on the Doctor's story as made the modest narrator blush again and again.

"Little Prue," said George, "is a charming character. A staunch old widower like myself, mourning for my lost love, and comparing women one with another, may be allowed to be a judge; and from what you have said of her, there is no lady in the land whom I should be more proud to meet than Mrs. Julius Corner."

"I hope that meeting will not be far distant," said the happy possessor of that lady; "and I would advise you all to get married as quickly as you can."

"A case of the fox, again," said Cimabue; "why, we are all married men; here is Felix, little more than twenty-two, and a father, and I can show you a procession of young painters, and such a wife, sir, that no man in London, in all London can equal."

"Bravo, Scumble!" ejaculated Carew; "I'll back you up—lay any money on what he says; never saw a better woman than Mrs. Scumble. The truth is, that when a woman is married to the man she loves, she grows better and better every year of her life; that is, supposing the man is true and generous and knows how to treat her."

"There are some men," said Dr. Corner, "who never make good surgeons, who always bungle with an operation, who kill their patients with a surprising facility, and are no more to be thought of as belonging to the faculty, of orna-

menting the noble art of healing, than butchers are. So there are some men who never should be trusted with a woman's heart, and who make as great a mull of that as a sailor would of a fine-mouthed horse if he were driving, or a groom in steering a thirty-ton yacht with all the canvas set and the wind blowing on to a lee shore."

"Or a painter and glazier—a good grainer, let us say—would in copying a fine Titian or a Van Huysum," added Cimabue.

"Or, let us add, a coal-whipper would in handling a delicate Dresden vase, all eggshell flowers and gilded scrolls," suggested Felix.

The little party having now arrived in Fleet Street, and Carew being pressed with a mighty desire to see his proof, the party separated, Mr. Scumble and Corner going towards Covent Garden, there to listen to certain glees and smoke a quiet cigar, and Felix returning home to relate to his wife some sketch of the pleasant evening he had enjoyed. The friends did not, however, separate until George Carew had invited them to meet one or two others at his rooms the next evening, when he promised to read them a story he had just finished. "Not that I'm given to reading stories," he said; "and indeed I think that to all authors, except some happy individuals, the contemplation of their own works must be rather a trouble than otherwise. But I've promised, you know, and that promise I must keep."

It was in compliance with this, on the next evening, the company being duly assembled, that George Carew read out the following story, calling it "At Last; or, the Window of a Woman's Heart."

"'Tis a window," said Dr. Corner, rudely interrupting the reader, as he nervously shuffled with his papers, "that we should all like to look into."

"Some of us do; and, if we believe modern journals and modern authors, see nothing so very pleasant there," said the barrister, who was a guest.

"Hold your tongue, and let us peep into this casement which Carew is about to hold open to us," returned Cimabue, settling himself comfortably in one of the many chairs with which Carew's study was furnished. Silence then being obtained, the author began his reading.

# "AT LAST"; OR THE WINDOW OF A WOMAN'S HEART.

"'THERE are philosophers, of whom I am one,' said the sick man, with a smile, 'who do not credit woman's friendship. I don't mean towards man —that's certain enough; but towards one another. If they are friends while they are girls, the friendship soon disappears when they grow into women; nay, the apparition of a lover will make friendship fly away as quickly as possible.'

"This was by far too long a sentence for one so very ill, although produced by fits and gasps.

"'Perhaps you are right, my dear boy,' said a gentleman by the bedside, holding the dying man's hand in his. The two men were old schoolfellows, and at this time of trial the old boy's feelings came back. It was again Harry and Willy with them, and Harry lay in the darkened room—a strong, powerful man suddenly stricken down in the midst of his life and strength. He had been forbidden to speak, but speak he would; he had so much to say, and he endeavoured to say

it, although his life-blood welled up to his lips every time he spoke.

"Willy Frazer, who sat clasping his hand, spoke in a very low tone, as if to hush his friend, and continued holding up his finger as he spoke. 'Perhaps so; but what do we want with a philosophical disquisition now?—all you have to do is to get well.' The patient shook his head. 'At any rate,' said Frazer, 'oh, hang it, Harry, don't die—don't think of dying yet!'

"There was so much feeling in these broken words that the dying man turned towards him with a sad smile and marked the tears in his eyes. He would have spoken, but his friend put his hand over his mouth. He saw at a glance that William Frazer believed in him as he had always done—believed that by an act of will he could do more than any doctor in the land, or in the world. The reason of this faith was that Harry and Willy, at school and through life, were two different beings. Harry Armstrong was a dark, strong fellow, with a chest big enough for two; an arm which served him well, a ready bold wit; and, in fact, power in him, and plenty of it too. He had protected Frazer, who was but a weak little fellow, soft and docile, but very clever, and who of course, as we all of us like those whom we protect, began to like him. The mutual respect and liking continued through life, and the mutual difference too. Frazer was poor, and not very well able to help himself; Armstrong rich, and able to help others. He helped his friend to a very decent match and to a cosy place; and he helped himself to one of the handsomest wives in the kingdom, who brought him a daughter, and then shortly died. Then suddenly, too, he

began to lose his heartiness; and although for twelve long years he was always a foremost man, he was never the man he used to be. That great chest of his, which ought, as the doctors said, to have been sound enough for anything, grew very troublesome; he caught cold upon cold, neglected himself, and was at last brought down to where we found him, with no hopes of life; his will made, his fortune left to his daughter, and his daughter and all her future to one whom he could trust—his soft, tender old schoolfellow, who was never half the man he was, but was now, in life at least, worth twenty thousand times more. Armstrong knew and felt all this, and yet could not, dared not, say what was nearest to him; and Frazer looked at him to explain the asking eye, very earnestly and very fondly. Suddenly that eye grew very bright indeed, and Frazer in alarm rang a little bell. The physician came in, the patient rose suddenly from the high pillows that propped him up, put his white handkerchief to his mouth and covered it with crimson blood—and then lay back never to speak more.

"Some months after this Mr. William Frazer, in his comfortable house in the New Road—which then was in the country, as the open fields stretched up to Hampstead and Highgate—sat quietly tasting a glass of old port—and wine of 1820 was then of the future—and looking out upon his half-moon lawn and the circular sweep of gravel-ride, up which two girls of about sixteen were slowly riding. They contrasted as much as the two schoolfellows could have done. One was dark, somewhat tall, and very beautiful; the other fair, *petite*, graceful, and only pretty. One was clothed wholly in mourning, almost without a bow or ribbon; the

other was dressed in white, with lilac ribbons and bows, and with a huge straw hat with lilac streamers to it. The difference extended even to the ponies; one was finely bred, strong, and black; the other a cream-coloured pet pony, that took liberties, and was obstinate and fond, would only go by fits and starts, and was altogether an irregular pony, decently quiet to ride and drive, but of no character at all.

"These young ladies, whom Mr. Fraser was gazing on with quiet melancholy, were both dear to him; one, as being his own daughter, the other as the daughter of his dear and dead friend. The meditative gentleman quietly took another glass of wine—he was soft, pensive, and fond of good living —and as he swallowed it, cracked a walnut, and said, as he peeled it, 'Poor Harry! he died with a philosophical sentence on his lips about the friendship of woman. Now, really, if he could only see these two girls, and know their deep affection for each other, I believe he would be convinced; I really do think he would indeed, poor fellow!'

"Mr. Frazer was very easily convinced himself; and his conviction of the purity and depth of the affection of the two young ladies was well founded. They did love each other deeply, and called each other Amy and Hetty, as girls will, with a dozen sweet adjectives by turns tacked to the names. Amy was Miss Frazer, and Hetty—the short, or, at least, Amy's diminutive for Henrietta—was Miss Armstrong.

"The difference, so marked externally, extended to the minds of the girls; and hence, probably, their friendship. Amy wanted guidance, Hetty could give it, and did not at all object to do so. Amy was as soft and yielding as her father; Henrietta, strong, commanding, very wise, and very pure—

full of what Mr. Fraser called 'the very best common-sense, A 1,' which he, poor fellow, acquired with great difficulty, principally by experience, which, in his case, was indeed like the stern-lights of a ship, and only lighted the track over which he had passed.

"'Well, girls,' said he, with a welcome equally tender to each, 'and what have you been talking about?'

"'Fortune,' said Amy; 'fortune, papa. And what a wonderful thing it is, isn't it?'

"''Tis, indeed,' said Mr. Fraser, looking at his glass of port with one eye shut, as if he were reading a sentence. 'I never could quite understand it. Armstrong didn't believe in it, poor fellow! I did.'

"'Just like Hetty,' said Amy; 'but what I say is—just look here. Here we stand—we are about as old as each other; but look at the difference—she has all the beauty.' Hetty smiled and shook her head. 'All the cleverness.'

"'All the good sense, certainly,' said Mr. Frazer; at which Hetty blushed.

"'And, to crown all, the biggest fortune. Indeed, she is an heiress; and this poor dear, dear papa, is not worth half as much. I have heard him say so.'

"'But I'd give all,' said Hetty, earnestly, 'to have what you have—a father.' There were no tears in her eyes. Hetty was not given to crying; but the tone of voice touched Amy so much that she put her arms round her friend's neck and said that she had been 'a little fool,' and a cruel one too, to remind Hetty of her loss; and Mr. Frazer cordially assenting in the self-imposed verdict, the conversation was changed.

"For four or five years dark and fair lived on, growing, if

possible, fonder and fonder of each other. Mr. Frazer every day found that his verdict was right, and that the two young women were fast friends. Still, Amy's character had remained the same—do we, indeed, ever change from our originals?—and Hetty, who had improved her externally, had not altered the soft, fond heart, and the quiet, trusting mind which so much wanted some one to cling to and protect it. Mr. Frazer had long been a widower, and Amy wanted a mother—a character which Henrietta very quietly and wisely filled. She even took poor Willy Frazer in hand—he was still Willy with his friends, though verging on forty-seven—and if she did not make him lay by money, she prevented him from spending a great deal. In fact, Hetty was the acknowledged head of the establishment.

"She was busied in some household work, some tradesmen's accounts, which 'always made Amy's head ache,' and would, if Hetty had not been there, have made Frazer's pocket ache. While the father and daughter were together, it was very seldom that they talked of her in her absence. They both loved her too much to hide anything from her; but at present they did so.

"'I suppose, Amy,' said Frazer, who prided himself on his knowledge of the world, as most soft easy men do, 'I suppose we owe that invitation to Lady Trefoil's to dear Hetty. What a treasure she is!'

"'La! papa!' said Amy, with slight indignation, 'what! to get you an invitation to that stupid old dowager's, where you said the wine was bad?'

"'Execrable!' said Frazer.

"'Well, execrable; and there was no one worth speaking to except Godfrey Fielding. The young men all took notice of Hetty, and left me to myself.'

"'Money,' said Mr. Frazer, oracularly, 'money is not only the root of all evil, but also the general attraction of mankind. At one time a young lady has two chances in life—that is, before she is born——'

"'Before she is born, papa!' interrupted Amy, in some surprise.

"'Yes,' continued her father; 'the young being who is about to be born has two chances if a girl, and only one if a boy. If a girl it might be born poor—well and good; but then, if beautiful, its next chance comes. Men marry for beauty; and the daughter of a beggar might, from her beauty, be chosen to fill a throne.' Having wound up his sentence thus prettily, Mr. Frazer rubbed his hands and apologised to his daughter—soft, good man as he was—for talking metaphysics.

"'Chosen to fill a throne!' said Amy, with disdain. 'All those chances took place in the old ballad days, when the beggar lived at Bednal Green.'

"'There are a good many beggars there now,' said Mr. Frazer; 'but no such chances. Yes; Godfrey Fielding was a nice young fellow.'

"'The only one in the company that *I* cared about,' said Amy, with decision—an unwonted decision, too—'what say you, Hetty?'

"Miss Amy thought that Henrietta had heard the name as she entered, or she would not have asked the question.

Hetty had to have it put fully to her, and then, with a very slight blush, answered 'that she liked Mr. Fielding's manner very much.'

"'A man of a good family,' said Mr. Frazer, who, in the absence of a bluebook, knew everybody; 'good family but poor; poor as a church mouse; indeed, he will be a church mouse, for he is just taking orders.'

"'Ah! I supposed something of the sort, for he paid Hetty and me equal attention; and yet I would rather marry him with three hundred a year than any one else with six.'

"'Amy, Amy,' said Miss Armstrong, with a slight shudder, 'how you do run on!'

"'Greatly,' said Frazer, tapping his half closed hands together and making his finger-nails clatter with a little clash. 'Mr. Godfrey Fielding is what Lady Trefoil calls forbidden fruit for a poor girl like you. You know the blind beggar's daughter at Bednal Green, as you correctly pronounced it, did not marry another beggar.'

"'La! papa, how mercenary you are!' laughed Amy. Hetty blushed prettily and turned the conversation, and Mr. Godfrey Fielding dropped out of record for that night at least.

"But not out of remembrance. Both girls thought of him, and both were very glad when, two days afterwards, he called on Mr. Frazer. He was in orders then; he had attended ordination and had taken his vows. He wore, I am bound to say, a white neckerchief with a huge bow, and in those days had not the M.B. waistcoat with the step-collar, which even the lowest Evangelical now assumes.

He looked very well, very handsome, and was altogether as fresh-coloured, honest, unassuming a young parson as one could look on. There are parsons and parsons; and an authoress, now, alas! dead, has touched with a fine scorn upon some of the failings of our curates; but believe me, there are some good fellows, not far from angels, among them—men who do their duty as bravely as any soldier who goes to meet his death or win his glory and promotion. The Rev. Mr. Fielding was, above all, manly. Shrewd, observant, well read, and full of knowledge, he never failed to please his acquaintance, and could, no doubt, have risen in the Church, had he chosen to think about a rich benefice instead of his duty.

"Being manly, it is no wonder that both these young women liked him, and that he grew very intimate with Mr. Frazer. Months passed away, and Amy had once or twice to scold her friend and adviser, and Mr. Frazer had to tap his soft and delicate nails more than once, as he heard from his daughter of the refusals of good offers which Miss Armstrong had perpetrated—offers, too, which in more than one instance brought dignity and rank with them, emanating, as Amy said, from the 'Trefoil lot.'

"At last Miss Amy, who was growing a little more impatient than she needed, went a visit in the country, leaving her dear friend and adopted sister at home. Miss Armstrong, who had her opinions about the matter, and who was justly indignant because the young fellows would prefer making love to her rather than to her good friend Amy, made some exception in favour of the Reverend Godfrey Fielding, who came just as constantly to the house now that Amy was away as

when she was present, and who, knowing Miss Armstrong's riches as well as benevolence, seldom came without some sad story, which touched her heart, and at the same time lightened her purse.

"At length, one day when Amy was expected home, and when these visits had become very dear to Miss Henrietta Armstrong, the young clergyman left Mr. Frazer at dinner descanting on the excellence of port wine, and joined Miss Armstrong in the drawing-room. As in those days the gentlemen were expected to give the ladies at least three hours to prepare the coffee, Miss Hetty might be excused for her look of gratified surprise, although she well knew that the young curate seldom exceeded one modest glass, and that Mr. Frazer, from whom she cunningly extracted all this knowledge, rather despised him as one who did not or could not take his bottle.

"'Well, Sir,' said Hetty, looking up into his good face as a sister might, 'you have made an early appearance. I suppose you have some sad story to relate.'

"'Indeed I have,' returned Godfrey, taking a chair and carrying it to the side of Hetty's sofa; 'but I don't know how to commence.'

"'Indeed!' said the lady, with a pretty impudence, putting her white hand in her pocket to feel for her purse; 'you are generally very fluent on other people's woes, Mr. Fielding.'

"'But, alas!' said the curate, 'this woe is my own.'

"Hetty blushed slightly and smiled, as if she knew a cure.

"He continued: 'I have come to be your suitor.'

"The smile faded from Hetty's cheek; the pretty lips were parted, the breath came and went; she dared not turn her

eyes upon him when he paused. He rose from his chair and walked a step backwards, then forwards.

"'Pray go on, Sir,' she said at last.

"'Oh! if you can—you who are so rich, so good, so pitiful, and kind—if you can aid one who does not know how to speak, who dares not approach one whom he loves——'

"'This is pretty well,' thought strong-minded Hetty; 'but, oh! these men; we women never quite understand them.'

"'—— who has for many, many a day come here purposely to speak, but yet found his speech die away upon his lips; oh! if you will let your heart speak for him—plead for him—he will bless you all his life.' In his energy the young clergyman had knelt on one knee to her, and now lifted up his eyes and looked pleadingly in her face.

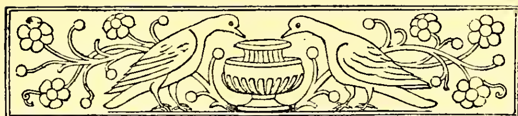
"'Godfrey,' she said, quietly, but not calmly, putting out her hand.

"'Yes, call me Godfrey; you give me hopes.' He rose as he said this, and Miss Hetty rose too. He placed one arm around her. 'Call me Godfrey, and plead for me as a sister would for a brother. I love, I dearly love your friend Amy—Miss Frazer.'

"He knelt again as he said this, and Miss Hetty sank suddenly on the sofa. He was too much agitated to notice her sudden pallor and distress, and, having once got through his difficulty he proceeded quietly enough. 'In the presence of the woman I love,' he said, 'I am a mere fool. I dare not speak nor write to her; but at last I have determined to do so. Here is the letter; it is open. Read it, and then aid me if you can.'

"Miss Armstrong rose hastily. Yes,' she said. 'Yes, Mr.

Fielding, I will do as you wish. Give me the letter, and then go. *Her* father'—she laid a pretty strong accent on the pronoun—'will miss you.' As Mr. Godfrey was himself very much agitated, he rose hastily, and, thanking his protectress very humbly, joined Mr. Frazer at the port, when he astonished that worthy gentleman by finishing a decanter which was half full, and which the good man had reserved for himself. 'By Jove!' said he to himself, in wonder, 'by Jove! Why, when he is a rector, he will drink like a fish.' Having astonished his friend in this way, Mr. Fielding hastily departed, fearing to face the lady in the drawing-room, and feigning a call of duty which indeed he set himself, and faithfully kept."



## AT LAST—THE WINDOW OF A WOMAN'S HEART—*(continued).*

A CERTAIN pause having been made—in fact, ten minutes being allowed for refreshments—Mr. Carew again cleared his manly pipes and went on reading as freshly as ever, being evidently pleased with the interest taken in the story :—

"In the mean time, whilst Mr. Fraser was wondering at the curate's sudden incursion and bold attack on the port, Miss Hetty, her face pale, her lips parted, and her heart beating—oh ! so quickly—walked towards her own room.

"In La Motte Fouqués story of 'Undine,' that author has drawn a woman—what shall we say ?—a child, a sprite, without a soul, which love alone gives her. Her childish character, before she receives this great gift, is very wonderful and very beautiful. How Undine felt then, we know. Hetty, as she walked towards her chamber, thought of the story, and felt that she was a woman too, without a soul; for all hope, all care, all love had for the moment vanished. Had she walked out of an open window, into fire, or into the raging sea, it would have been the same. The one object for which, during

the last few weeks, she had allowed herself to hope, had gone, and gone for ever. She was so true, so conscientious, that, while Amy was with her—in spite of the hints of that young lady that parsons always looked out for rich women, and Mr. Frazer's worldly assurance that they were quite right to do so, that being, in his opinion, their only way of rising in the world—she never allowed herself for one moment to think of Godfrey otherwise than as a good, kind gentleman, whom she liked and respected.

"When, however, in Amy's absence he had called so often, and after he had availed himself of every opportunity of being with her, she believed, allowed herself to believe, all that her heart wished; and, as we know, when she had made up her mind it was pretty well made up for life. *Quod vult valde vult* is an old motto and a good one. Hetty only wished that which was good and right; but when she wished it she did so with all her mind, with all her heart, with all her soul.

"She found herself somehow with the door locked, standing opposite her dressing-glass. Her face was very pale, her eyes hollow, and her lips parted as we see them in those sad Greek masks of tragedy. She noticed all this. There were no tears—not a single tear.

"She pitied herself somewhat, in her own strong-minded way. 'Poor thing!' she said, 'and Amy envied me, envied my riches and my beauty; much they're worth to me!'

"Then suddenly one faint flush of hope came into her sad heart. She opened the letter hurriedly. 'He may have been hurried and confused,' she said. '*I* loved *him.* He must have loved me.'

"Quickly this faint hope of requital, this trust in the final Justice of the Heart, faded out. One glance at the letter, one glance, which saw it was a prayer to Amy's father to be allowed to speak to his daughter, and to Amy herself to listen, was enough. The letter dropped unfolded to the ground, and Hetty knelt, bending low down with her hands upon her knees.

"'Father, lover, husband! she has all these, and I not one. Poor thing! poor thing!'

"Some few hot tears came then; but Miss Hetty was not given to pitying herself, and she soon dried them, for she was one of those rare young ladies who are as full of true courage as they are of tenderness. So it was, perhaps, not surprising that Mr. Frazer found his cup of coffee ready at the usual time, and Miss Hetty as quietly engaged in a novel, as if nothing had happened. Nothing had; it was only a little mistake on the part of the young lady, that was all.

"As Mr. Frazer was very full of his port wine, and rather given to somnolency, Miss Armstrong may be excused that she did not immediately give Mr. Fielding's letter to her guardian, or attempt to open the subject. When, however, she took her candle to go to bed, leaving Mr. Frazer to muddle his brains by reading half a dozen paragraphs of the *Times* one after the other, while he smoked the mildest of mild cigars; when Hetty rose she quietly put the opened letter into his hand, and said—

"'This is addressed to and concerns you, Sir; more nearly it concerns Amy; but Mr. Fielding insisted that I should glance at it. Perhaps it will be better for you to speak about it, after due reflection, to-morrow. Good night!'

"'Eh, what? The editor seems here to——. Oh, she's gone,' said Fraser. 'Where the plague! I hate letters, and here is one.'

"He quietly finished the Thundering leader, and then took up the letter and read it. Having read it, he yawned, and, making a silent vow to sleep on the matter, went to bed to sleep on it accordingly.

"In the morning Amy, who had been driven over with a friend, came and joined her father at breakfast, and was present at the consultation. She was delighted with the proposal, and said, laughingly, 'There, Hetty, you always said dear Godfrey had good taste, and he shows it by preferring me to you.' Hetty answered with her quiet smile, and, although her wearied eyes gave proof of a sleepless night, answered gently. Not so Mr. Fraser. He declared the marriage could not be—that it would never do for one beggar to marry another, and that Godfrey Fielding was a silly fellow, after all, not to fall in love with the best and finest girl, too, and the girl who had a fortune.

"In the end, however, Hetty with soft persuasion overruled Mr. Fraser's objections, on the understanding that no one was to think of marriage until Fielding had obtained a living. Miss Amy pouted a little at this; but dear Godfrey obtained leave to come and pay those attentions which all find so sweet, and in a twelvemonth Amy and Godfrey were married; and six months after, Mr. Fraser died quietly in his bed, of some nameless and uncertain disease, which seemed more like a carelessness of life and a want of desire to live than anything else.

"When I remember that twelvemonth—that long, long,

twelvemonth of courtship—my heart is touched with pity at the silent martyrdom which Hetty must have endured. Amy vowed, and wondered as she did so, that she was going to be an old maid, and joked and laughed at her; nay, taught the Rev. Godfrey Fielding, who, it was evident, could be, like most clergymen, somewhat uxorious, to venture a joke now and then too, and also to do his courtship very openly. Hetty was hardly ever held as *de trop*, although, with much delicacy on his part, Fielding would have made his sweetheart, if he could, less demonstrative. Hetty, however, bore it all; she saw, too, how the strength of him whom she had loved was rather weakened by the contact with Amy than strengthened; she saw that, day by day, Amy did not rise to the noble prospects of the man, but brought him down to her frivolity. It was a bitter trial, but Hetty bore it all—nay, she took very quietly one or two severe scoldings from Amy, when, in employing her pocket-money, she had purposely sent away the Rev. Godfrey on some errand of charity.

"'You will run him off his legs after those nasty poor,' said Amy, in a pet; 'he was to have taken me to an Oratorio.'

"'But duty, Amy, duty,' said Hetty, calmly.

"'Oh, yes,' returned the other young lady, petulantly, 'bother duty; we shall have a whole lifetime to think upon our duty.'

"'And God grant we may do so,' returned Hetty, with a sudden break in her voice; 'God give us strength—Amen! amen!'

"They were married—Amy and Godfrey. Hetty was bridesmaid, and more affected—which I am told is no unusual thing—than the bride herself. Godfrey, to be sure, was

but a poor curate, and Amy had but very little money, but they were rich in hopes—a kind of possession for which none of us pays any income tax, but which is yet very valuable; nor was the Rev. Mr. Fielding the only curate who has had to draw largely upon that bank, a draught upon which, thank God, has never been dishonoured. Nor was it in this case. Miss Armstrong had been very busily employed during the wedding tour of her friends with her solicitor, a shrewd old friend of poor Mr. Fraser, who, as we have shown, was surrounded with shrewd people, who, however, did not communicate any of their tact to him. Mrs. Amy Fielding had been speculating upon some unknown admirer presenting her husband—that young embodiment of all the clerical virtues—with a living. And sure enough, a solicitor's letter awaited them on their arrival at their modest home, which contained the news 'that the living of Hayward's Green, having become vacant by the death of the Reverend Samuel Purr, A.M., had been bestowed upon'—no one less than the Rev. Godfrey Fielding, B.A., sometime Fellow of Merton. Great was the joy of Amy. Those excellent sermons, she was sure, had done it all; whereas Hetty suggested that the gift might have some connection with the visitation of the poor.

"'Poor!' said Amy, pouting; 'poor indeed! We don't know who our benefactor is, and that's one trouble; but we do know what we get from the poor. Godfrey will some day be bringing home typhus fever to me and the children.'

"She blushed as she spoke it.

"'Oh! Amy,' said he, reproachfully; 'I shall rather think

with Hetty than you. May God reward our benefactor and turn my work to good account.'

"Nor did he forget, as Hetty well remembered, when they all knelt down to family prayer, to bless the giver again and again.

"Indeed, for sixteen years, during which Godfrey filled Mr. Purr's place, never did he forget that little prayer. Amy yawned over it sometimes, for she was rather restive at prayers, and often turned round to look at the children—two fine boys and a girl, who, by-the-way, never had the typhus fever at all—and never failed to bring away in that look some useful hint as to their faces or clothes. Poor Amy was, you see, not much given to rapt devotion, and was, therefore, very well suited to be the 'light of the parsonage,'—as some good lady has called the clergyman's wife—to the parish so long ministered to by the easy and comfortable Mr. Purr.

"Not far from that parsonage Miss Hetty Armstrong built herself a pretty little cottage, breaking the hearts of more than one likely young fellow who offered his heart and his empty pocket to her, and on more than one occasion sending away a pretty fortune as well as a pretty fellow. As time went on, and it became rumoured that 'that foolish fort, a heart,' as Suckling says, was in Hetty's case impregnable, the sieges put to her constancy became less frequent, and finally ceased altogether. Lady Trefoil introduced no one else; and the Rev. Godfrey Fielding, who once took upon himself to declaim to Miss Armstrong on the duty and beauty of marriage, received such an answer

that he never spoke of it to her again. As Hetty was prime manager for Mrs. Amy, the chief friend of her children, the delight of the poor, and very often the defender of Mrs. Fielding against the just anger of her husband, we may be sure that that happy matron did not urge her to marry. Perhaps Hetty's heroism was never shown more than in the instances in which she, as the common friend of the two, defended the wife with the weak point, against the husband with the strong. Like Cato, the cause of the conquered pleased her more than the cause of the victorious; she had a twisted crotchet in her head that she was doing her duty in aiding the woman whose husband she had once dared to love.

"Mr. Fielding, as we have said, never caught anything from the poor; but he caught and brought home with him something from the graveside of a rich parishioner, who had left him a legacy, and whom he rose from the fag end of an illness to bury, something which lasted him for life, and that was a cold, which carried him off very rapidly. Mrs. Amy was in despair. Godfrey was at once exalted to an angel, and herself to that state of martyrdom which passionate people claim for themselves in their troubles. Hetty, who could not come near to nurse him while his wife waited on him, was by him when she broke down in her passionate grief, when he died, and sat for many an hour by the dead body in the darkened room, as it lay in the narrow home which waits for all of us. The Christmas bells were ringing in the air; a sound of merriment seemed all about them, all around, but not in that sad, sad house. The mother sat below, rocking herself backwards and

forwards in her grief, when Hetty, taking the face-cloth from the dead, kissed the forehead and the lips—those lips which had pronounced her fate—and murmured, 'Godfrey, dear Godfrey, you know all now; you know how I have loved you. I will still watch over those whom you loved; I will live for them and for you.'

"And indeed Miss Hetty kept her vow. She grew more active and more cheerful, and, as Amy complained in her widow's weeds, had the 'best of it, for she could never know the loss of a husband—and such a husband—no, never.' But comfort came to the clergyman's widow, and the weeds fell off or grew into flowers through careful cultivation; whereas Miss Armstrong's plain, strong-pronounced black never varied; 'but then,' said Amy, 'you look so well in it.'

"Once Hetty, who busied herself in getting the boys—by-the-way, the young Fieldings did her the honour to love her as much, and respect her somewhat more, than the mother who spoilt them—out in life, and in seeing the girl named after her educated and introduced into society—Hetty was once filled with a strange joy, and that was when Amy told her that the successor of Godfrey in the living once held by Mr. Purr, M.A. — one Mr. Dennis O'Flurry, B.A., of Trinity College, Dublin—had proposed that she should put an end to her widowhood, and become again the 'light of the parsonage.' Mr. O'Flurry was very eloquent, was the nephew of an Irish Lord, and the younger brother of an Irish M.P., and had deserted the faith of his fathers to try his fortunes in the Anglican Church. His views were certainly extreme, but very powerful; and the

parish, which had been decidedly sleepy under Mr. Purr, and quietly active with Fielding, became uneasy and restless under Dennis O'Flurry.

"Amy, not at all averse to the tall, brawny, and impressive cleric, promised to consult her friends—meaning Hetty and her daughter—and Hetty hurried home to consult herself. 'His widow!' she said, bitterly; '*his* widow! *I* alone am his widow, now as I ever was. Yes; let her marry; let her leave me at least his memory and his grave.' But in the morning calm reflection came. He was her husband; his wife should never share the fortunes nor receive the embraces of another; and true to him, Hetty dissuaded Mrs. Amy, sore against her will, to *chasser* the eloquent Incumbent of Hayward's Green.

"Whether for the loss of this second aid and helper—and Amy always wanted two—or from a want of excitement, poor Mrs. Fielding after this ran down like a clock, and, quietly dying, was laid by Godfrey's side. And then, for a few years, Hetty still lived on, still beautiful and good; the dear mother and friend of his children, whom she lived to see well placed and married—nay, to hear a little Godfrey call her grandmother. A young grandmother, indeed, but one who had lived her life faithful to one love, never uttered, never guessed at, known to no one but herself. It was time the thorn she had worn so long in her bosom should reach her heart, and it did at last. One Christmas time, one merry Christmas time, when the air seemed filled with common joy and the bells swung jubilant in the frosty air, and the children downstairs were shouting in their glee, one Miss Hetty Armstrong, an old maid, spending, as was

her wont, her Christmas Day alone, suddenly rose up with tearful eyes from a half-doze, to obey a summons which we all must have, and said, quickly, 'Godfrey, I am here. At last! at last!'

"So the summons came; so ended a life made happy by a passion repressed and a duty done, and of which it seemed to me fit that a record should be made."*

* It is due to the public to state that the motive of this story is taken from a hint conveyed in a very few lines by a French author.

## THE SOLICITOR'S WINDOW.

HERE was a gratified silence when the narrator had finished this story, and afterwards, as he acknowledged to have taken his plot from two lines only, a mere hint, of a French writer, an animated discussion on the merits of our present authors. These gentlemen Carew defended warmly, satirically declaring that he did not as others, and that truly authors in general were mere gossips who attacked other authors behind their backs.

"Ah, when shall we find the time," cried he, "when a fellow will run about praising another's work as dear Dick Steele did that of Joseph Addison, or great, generous, strong Swift did the pamphlet of the young Cambridge fellow whom he tried to lift into fame." Then, pausing suddenly, he declared that there was too much talk about authors, and imperiously ordered Mr. Bagsley to tell a story.

"I shall begin," said the barrister, oratorically, first bowing to Carew.

"You had best not begin in that tone," interjected his friend; "for, of all methods of speaking, I think you gentlemen of the bar have the worst."

"I will bow to the court, mi lud," returned Bagsley, humouring Carew. "In my opinion, Carew is not far wrong. Barristers do indeed get into a sad way; but then *mine* is far different."

"Oh, indeed!" said Scumble, winking at George, who laughed heartily. Happily the effect of this badinage was that Mr. Bagsley delivered his story in a much more natural way than else he would have done. In a short time, indeed, his oratorical manner—which is not preserved in print—sensibly wore off, and his friends listened without impatience to his sketch of "The Solicitor's Window." "Castle Street, Holborn, is not a very fine lively street, nor has it been such for many years. Once upon a time, no doubt—and if it were possible to fix the date, the 'once' would be found many years ago—respectable people lived in it; that is, people who possibly kept gigs, and gave dinners once a quarter, went out into the country by the Margate hoy, and entertained a due regard for the aristocracy. There is a legend still existing, that, within the memory of the fathers of the present generation, the street contained a good old firm of solicitors, and that at least once a quarter the family coach of a peer of the realm was seen waiting on the sunny side of the wide part of the street—for Castle Street, except in two parts, has only passage for one vehicle—and that the plated harness sparkled in the sunshine, which plainly lighted up the coronets and coats of arms upon the panels of my Lord Viscount's coach.

"Those days have long since passed by. A street is in not very good case when it falls to the lot of solicitors; and years ago the best firms of solicitors had commenced an

emigration from the street, and had settled in Lincoln's Inn Fields, Chancery Lane, and thereabouts, leaving Took's Court, Castle Street, and its neighbour, Cursitor Street, to law-stationers, law-writers, and the inferior followers upon the great Juggernaut of English Law.

"Cursitor Street, you may remember, was pitched upon by a sponging-house, kept by a person who the euphuism of the present 'picked' age would say was of the 'Hebrew persuasion,' but plainer and better English would at once call a Jew. Of the true old sort was this Jew, a man who looked upon life as a riddle which few people could solve, and which most people had better give up. But he solved it by renting a very dirty, mean-looking house, or rather, when business was good, two houses, which were strongly built, and the windows of which, back and front, were secured with iron bars. This place, called a 'sponging-house,' probably because debtors came there now and then to be 'sponged' from the debts which they had contracted, and which soiled them, was about the most melancholy and God-forsaken looking dwelling, or more truly den, in all London, and yet, surely, the dearest. Were you a gentleman whose creditors could not wait, you were hastily summoned there by a long slip of a letter without any envelope, the copy of which was generally placed in your hands by a vagabond hanger-on of the Sheriff of Middlesex instead of a postman, who, after you had read the summons, took care not to leave you till you were safely within the very hospitable doors aforesaid. But it was only the doors and the windows that were hospitable. They determined to keep you, and would rarely let you go; but the master of the prison took care to charge you an

immense rent for the room you inhabited and the rough service he did you—for the den in Cursitor Street, and ground floor, first floor, back or front, were equally gloomy, dirty, and uncomfortable—was paid for at the rate of an enchanted palace, or of the dearest hotel in London or Paris, which is saying a good deal. It was an understood thing between the sages who made, and the virtuous people who administered our law, that a man being a debtor, and not able to pay his just debts, should have unjust debts to an enormous extent thrust upon him; that the sponging-house keeper should charge him an enormous rent for the dirty rooms in which the poor devil walked about, the horsehair chairs that he never sat upon, the uncomfortable sofa, all prickly with worn horsehair (compounded of grease where there were no slits, and slits and dust where there was no grease), upon which he moaned out his grief when tired of pacing his room.

"Why do I talk about these things?" said the narrator, suddenly; "you know how villainously the law is administered; you know that Fielding, and Dickens, and a dozen other men of the truest genius and an honest soul have protested against it, and that yet there is positively no attempt made to remedy it. Humanity is the poor man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho; the lawyers are the thieves; but there has been no Good Samaritan yet found to offer the charity of release.

"The iniquity amounts to this; that at last, in a philosophical and a Christian age, a certain number of men are detailed from the body of others, to be partially educated in English, and to be wholly taught in cunning and chicanery;

to study how to break through laws with impunity, not how to fulfil them; whose interest is diametrically opposed to the interests of humanity; who bring nothing worth having to the common stock; who can earn nothing by trade, but who are paid for trading in roguery and hatred, and manufacturing broils and troubles; whose health depends, in fact, on the ill health of the community."

"Upon my word!" cried George Carew, who seemed lifted out of his chair by wonder. "How is it, Bagsley, that you share the popular prejudices against attorneys?"

"Ah! *mon enfant*," said the little barrister, "if you only knew how we, who are the interpreters of the law, hate these unnecessary blood-suckers!"

"Well," said the artist, "they do intercept a good deal of the money before it comes to you; but you might pardon them a little, I think. They are, to gentlemen of your profession, necessary evils, and do all the 'touting,' which you pretend to be ashamed of."

"You are both in the same boat, Sir," said old Mr. Corner.

"I quite agree, though, with what Mr. Bagsley says," added Dr. Corner. "I have seen a good deal of the world when I walked the hospitals, and I never knew a man who had passed through the hands of solicitors to have either the slightest hope or respect for the law."

"There it is," said Bagsley, warmly; "and yet in theory how beautiful it is! But the practice! Is it not monstrous," he continued, waxing warm, "that when a man goes back in life and falls into trouble and misfortune, he should be robbed by the law's agents so thoroughly, that he shall imbibe not

only a strong hatred of all laws, but a thorough determination not to be honest again, based on a persuasion that all other men are rather worse rogues than he is, having conspired together to rob him when he was unfortunate? Not to kick a man when he is down is the English maxim of the brutal prize-ring; but to hit, pinch, strip, insult, and rob the man who is down amongst you, is not only the maxim of the law, but the custom of all its wisest and most successful practitioners."

"To return, however, to Castle Street," said Carew, interrupting this burst of forensic indignation. Mr. Bagsley bowed, and proceeded.

"As soon as it fell to law-stationers, law-reporters, and law-writers, whatever respectable and cleanly habits Castle Street once had, suddenly deserted it. The public-house at the corner of the court gained an accession of business, and became celebrated for late hours; and the doors of the houses were occupied by fat law-stationers, bloated, pale, greasy, and unwholesome, and their thin clerks, pale, shabby, half-starved, essentially dissipated, and more unwholesome still. You would not say that the law was a thriving business, nor a healthy one either for body or soul, if you watched the masters or the men who lounged at the doors of the law-stationers; and if you had looked into their offices, you would have seen that these 'professional gentlemen' were considerably worse off than the same number of tailors.

"The best times to observe the poor devils were, firstly, when Term was on and the stationers busy; and, secondly, when the law courts were closed, and the fellows had nothing to do. A sharp clear night in November—and in our con-

tradictory climate such can be found—might have been taken as the first; and then a sudden burst of the huntsman of curiosities into one of their burrows, say, a front parlour in Castle Street, would reveal a dozen or so dirty men, frowsy and pale with confinement, sitting in a little room that had barely room for two—lighted by half-a-dozen flaring jets of gas, shaded with dirty paper shades, and leaning in all sorts of unhealthy attitudes from tall stools, over a long mahogany desk, rough with hard wear, and spotted with ink. As the half-dozen flaring jets consumed as much oxygen as at least thirty more men would, one can conceive the choking fume that rushes from the room wherein the poor lawyers fag, who are slowly stewing to death. There are few things to be encountered worse than that. No wonder that the poor workhouse drudge, who is apprenticed to the law-stationer, is constantly sent to the corner public-house for 'threes' and 'fours' of gin, which is procured in medicine bottles, marked with doses for another kind of physic. Happily, the apprentice contracts such a cold in these visits that he is soon relieved from them by dying by consumption.

"Another time, as I have said, is the slack time, in which the bloated law-stationer, unhealthy from late hours, gin, constant confinement, and the dreadful pabulum his mind has in reading the verbiage that his clerks copy, is seen standing at his door, his den empty, and his pockets apparently full of keys or halfpence, which he lazily jingles as he stands.

"His merry men, in the meanwhile, having imbibed a fatal taste for stimulants, while working like slaves, are maundering and feeble, hanging round the public-house door, wanting

their accustomed screw-up, and not having the wherewith to pay for it. Now and then one, more bold than the others, dares to suggest to the landlord that he should trust them, because not one of the half-dozen has the price of a 'folio,' in his pockets; but the landlord is far too wise to indulge his natural commiseration at the expense of his pocket, and the feeble law-writer retires to the workhouse, where he dies of *delirium tremens!*"

"Dreadful!" said Carew, smiling, as he whispered to Bagsley; "gross exaggeration!"

The Barrister smiled in triumph.

"I am telling merely plain truth, gentlemen. Painting things as they are, Mr. Scumble; not as they ought to be.

"It was on one of the first of these days that Mr. Robert Naylor, of the firm of Sharker, Naylor, and Fluke, of Lincoln's Inn, a very eminent firm of solicitors, approached one of the law-stationers' offices in the street mentioned. The firm originally belonged to Mr. Naylor, senior; a decent man with a good conveyancing business; but as Naylor, junior, succeeded him, and combined only part of his father's cunning, with more than all of his mother's folly, he soon got into a mess, and Sharker and Fluke, a new firm, got him out of it.

"Shortly after this, the firm became Sharker, Naylor, and Fluke; the two very sharp rogues having placed a fool between them—an easy-going, apparently simple fellow—the better to deceive the public.

"But Mr. Naylor was ambitious. He was a doughy-faced man, slightly pitted with small-pox; so that his face, surrounded with dark-brown, unhealthy-looking hair, somewhat

resembled a slack, unbaked crumpet, burnt at the edges. Let us add two brown spots for eyes, and an unmeaning slit for the mouth, and we have Mr. Naylor to the life. Being ambitious, Naylor quarrelled with his partners, who, indeed, relegated him very properly to an inferior position in the firm, and in due time separated, with the loss of 'the pick' of his business, as his faithful clerk was never tired of telling him. Fools naturally fall into the status of rogues, if, indeed, they are not already rogues, just as rogues, as Coleridge has it, are fools *in circumbendibus*. Mr. R. Naylor had no alternative but to be a rogue—and he did not object to be one.

"On the contrary, he comforted himself with the fact that as Sharker and Fluke had served him out, he would serve out humanity. He had not an atom of hatred against the rogues; on the contrary, he rather liked them for their sharpness. His great ideal was the pompous Mr. Sharker; for he had not the merit and pluck to admire the more cunning and delicate workings of the villainy of Mr. Fluke, who fleeced his clients as if chance had absolutely forced him to do it, and who had the address to make the victim come gently to be shorn again and again.

"On the night in question, Mr. Naylor had been for some years on 'his own hook,' wriggling not at all to his satisfaction. He was not equal to the 'Artful Dodger,' like Sharker, nor could he play the bold and happy-go-lucky attorney like Fluke; so he determined to go on the kinchin-lay, like Noah Claypole, and make provision for his innocent and harmless existence by robbing women and children. We shall soon see why he entered Mr. Smallwove's shop, or, as he preferred to call it, office."

## THE SOLICITOR'S WINDOW—(*continued*).

WHEN Mr. Smallwove's door, pushed open by Robert Naylor, gentleman by Act of Parliament, and by no act of his own, knocked against a little bell, which rang from the middle of the room, to he slight confusion of the dazed clerks, a fume of gas, heated and foul air, and a smell compounded of gin and ink, rushed out into the face of the amiable Naylor, and nearly choked him. Unhappily, it did not quite do so.

"'Mr. Smallwove's up stairs,' said a pale man, with dishevelled hair, red eyes, and a hoarse voice; a man naturally given to being an amateur actor, and with a penchant to play the 'Stranger,' as well as the 'Gamester.' 'He's up stairs; but he'll soon be down. He's anxious for business, and pops on 'em pretty quick.'

"This was said in parenthesis, but quite openly. The poor slaves of the quill had arrived at that state of misery when concealment is felt to be quite useless. Their conversations, therefore, were savagely artless.

"'I'll wait outside,' said Mr. Naylor, shutting the door. 'Pah! no wonder that Smallwove prefers the society of his wife to *that.*'

"The clerk was quite right. Smallwove came quickly down stairs, summoned by the bell. He was a small man; fat, but not stout; unhealthily fat, and only remarkable from having two round, soft, beady, brown eyes, which looked Mr. Naylor plaintively in the face.

"'Won't you walk in, Sir?' he said.

"'No, thank you,' answered Naylor, with a shrug of his shoulders. 'I only want you to get me four copies of this will made by to-morrow. It is a short one. Your people can do it well in half an hour.'

"'Yes, Sir,' said Mr. Smallwove, in his quiet, plaintive voice, uttering a sigh as he spoke; 'I see it's a small one.'

"'Well, you mind and let me have the four copies, letter perfect, mind, by nine in the morning. Is not your room preciously hot, Mr. Smallwove?' Naylor said this with an unpleasant recollection of the gush of heated air which he had received.

"'Bless you, Sir, they like it,' said Mr. Smallwove.

"'Umph!' grunted the Solicitor. 'Well, I dare say it's all right.' He said this with some faint recollection of an article in the papers, about the ventilation of workrooms; but then, to be sure, there was nothing about the ventilation of lawyers' offices, nor of the wretched dens in Castle Street, where the poor law-writers consumed their lives so rapidly.

"Away went Mr. Naylor, not with a manly stride, but with a shuffle that was characteristic of the man. Talk about telling a man's character by his handwriting; you may tell it a great deal better by watching the way in which he walks!

"Mr. Smallwove, who was in a measure case-hardened against the fumes of his clerks, and the pervading atmosphere

of his own workshop, went in and gave the will to the blear-eyed melancholy clerk with the tendency towards theatrical entertainments. It was a short one, and the eye of the expert Smallwove took it in at a glance.

"'In the name of God, Amen,'—it began, the gentleman who drew it up being fond of such phrases, which, indeed, carried little with them to his mind. He was, he stated (and it had been written some time), in sound health, both of body and mind; but he was moved to execute this deed, and having been a solicitor, though not in practice, he had done it as shortly as might be. He was then living retired, away from his wife and family (his wife had since died), and by that cruel instrument he left his property away from those to whom it belonged, to the person with whom he chose to live, and for whom, in the slang of the day, he might be supposed to have a closer spiritual affinity.

"Wills! we boast of having the right of *libre arbitrement*, as the French say, still with us; but how cruelly that right is abused! The three children of Mr. William Freeman, the testator, had grown up, little helped by their father, and at his death they might have supposed, certainly they hoped, that the wrong he did them would have been in some measure redressed and atoned for. But the instrument, of which Mr. Naylor took care to have four copies made, did, when it came to be read, dissipate all such hopes. After its solemn exordium, it left all that the testator died worth to his mistress, to have and to hold during her lifetime, and the use thereof fully to enjoy, such residue as she might leave being left at her death to the children thereinafter named.

"'But,' and as he read this the next morning in one of the

copies of the will, Mr. Naylor let a greasy smile pass over his sallow countenance, 'if the said Mrs.——, who was also the executrix of the will, should marry, or live unchastely, then the property reverted to the said three children of the testator.'

"'That will do, Mr. Smallwove,' said Mr. Naylor, and, paying the law-writer his modest charge, he opened the door to him. Mr. Smallwove shuffled along the stone passage and passed out into the 'Fields.' Lincoln's Inn Fields, thus shortened by him to the last word, were the ideal of the country to Smallwove. He sniffed the air and thought it considerably fresher, as indeed it might well be, and as he walked marked the sparrows chirping on the stubby lilacs, and the children playing in the grass of the square. 'It will soon be spring now,' said the law-stationer; 'the trees are beginning to bud, and spring water-cresses are getting first-rate. I'll buy a pennyworth for Mrs. Smallwove.'

"Meantime Mr. Naylor was flattening a fleshy protuberance of no character, which he complimented by calling a nose, against his front window. His office was less dingy than lawyers' offices generally are. It boasted of two arm-chairs, and in addition to the usual japanned tinned boxes, a glazed book-case, in which were several well-bound volumes of light French literature and some others of plays—for Mr. Naylor was fond of the drama, and, indeed, in a fit of ecstasy, such as may even now and then make its entrance into a mean heart, had married a young person from the *coulisses* of a theatre. Amongst the tin boxes, which bore certain names on them in white letters, was one which was locked with a brass padlock, and bore the initials only of W. F. It was

Mr. Freeman's tin box, and, strange to say, Mr. Naylor produced a key which fitted the padlock, and opening the case—the lawyer had bolted his door after looking up and down the 'Fields' from his front window—took out an envelope and inserted the original of the will therein, and then locking the box, put it back to its place and breathed freely. 'That box,' said he, 'goes down to Clayton Heath to-morrow. It will be all right, do doubt.' He then examined the copies of the will, one of which very curiously bore Mr. Freeman's signature, and also that of Mr. Naylor as a witness, and then, calculating things carefully, placed a date to the copy and shut it up with the others in his own strong-box, of which one need not say no one else had a key.

"The box did go down to Clayton Heath, and, as it happened, Mr. Naylor never needed his copies of the will. Mr. Freeman, a curiously selfish person, felt that he was dying, and came up to London to get better medical advice, in which, by the way, he had not the slightest confidence, and never troubled himself about his will. *That* concerned other persons. What concerned him chiefly was that he was about to die, and he set himself to do so as comfortably as he could.

"If you knew the sort of man as well as I knew him," said the narrator, "you would not wonder at my thus passing over that exit which was of some importance to several parties concerned. Mr. Freeman's life had not been a very honourable one, nor a very happy one, and it was played out. A lawsuit, upon which almost all his property depended, had got into one of those beautifully intricate messes into which solicitors

know how to throw them, and at the same time his health and his conscience—and both at one time could bear a good deal—had got into a somewhat similar mess.

"Therefore Mr. William Freeman lay down to die, without hope, without much fear, only anxious to be as little 'bothered' as possible.

"He was very ill. Cold upon cold, which had settled on his chest, had wrought effects from which a very young man would hardly recover; and a young man has hopes, wishes, illusions, and a thousand brave and livelong fancies, a hundred projects of noble happiness and ambition, to live for; and all these Mr. William Freeman, at the age of fifty-two, just when Shakspere's poetic vision was at its height, had dissipated and lived down.

"Nevertheless, nature struggled very lustily and long, and the testator was a long time dying.

"His eldest son, for whom I was concerned, and who was my dearest friend," said Mr. Bagsley, "had lived long apart from his father, but was induced to come and see him, and a seeming reconciliation took place. But it was like too many of such acts on a death-bed—a one-sided affair. The son forgave with his whole heart, and wept even in the presence of Mr. Naylor, who was on the other side of the bed. The father, who hated scenes of any kind, was quite glad to get rid of his son; he wanted to lie still in that languid, painless state of weakness in which he was, floating towards the great river, careless of the haven to which the tide bore him. The son retired, moved, and full of forgiving love.

"'Did you speak about a will?' I asked.

"'A will! How could I at such a time? Let the poor dying man rest in peace. I can win my own way.'

"'But your sister, and your poor helpless brother, a cripple, as you know, for life. That is a different thing. You know their case.'

"'There is yet time,' said John Freeman, moodily. 'All will be well. It cannot be that he can go out of the world leaving the great wrong he did to my dead mother and her children unatoned.'

"'It can be,' I said. 'Such things happen every day. You don't know how foolish it is to trifle with time upon a death-bed.'

"'I will break it to Mr. Naylor,' said Freeman. 'He has nursed me when a boy, and will be my friend.'

"'As you like,' said I; 'let anybody do it, only let it be done.'

"It was done after a fashion. One day Mr. Freeman was observed to be nearly dead, and the servant summoned his son, who found Mr. Naylor, and the lady, who afterwards, as it turned out, was most beneficially concerned in the will, carefully watching by the sick man. Then it was that John Freeman determined to speak. 'The will!' he cried. 'Yes, there was a will,' said Naylor, 'and he had a copy of it—a blank one, unsigned; the actual will was in Mr. William Freeman's deed-box down at Clayton Heath. However, he could look at the copy, although it was an unusual and indelicate proceeding. But Mr. Freeman was as good as dead.'

"John Freeman did so, and sickened as he read the in-

strument. A smile of triumph passed over the face of the lady, and Mr. Naylor absolutely looked intelligent—a rare feat for him to achieve.

"'Does he *mean* this?' asked the son bitterly.

"'Of course he does,' said Naylor. 'He was only talking about it the day before yesterday.' This assertion sounded so much like a lie that it determined John Freeman, who insisted upon having the will attested.

"A quick look passed between the lawyer and the lady. Of course, Naylor had no objection, not the slightest. That, indeed, was just what he was about to urge. 'But who is to go down to Clayton Heath?'

"'I will find a person,' ejaculated Freeman, moodily.

"And as it happened," said the narrator, "*I* was the person selected. I shan't forget the search we had for the will. The box was found under some hay, together with a box of plate, in a stable-loft. The cause of this concealment—of which by the way, a certain groom was well aware—was that during the lady's absence no one might take any of the valuables, for Clayton Heath was a lonely place enough, although the people about it were honest; yet, had a cracksman from London known of the whereabouts of Mr. William Freeman's deed-box and family plate, we might have been saved an immense deal of trouble, and the family would have escaped a lawsuit, for you may depend upon it that the will would never have been found nor attested; yet, what am I saying ! I forgot the duplicate that the astute Mr. Naylor had in Lincoln's Inn Fields."

## THE SOLICITOR'S WINDOW—(*continued.*)

HE company of listeners here gave Mr. Bagsley a little time to refresh himself, for his story had rather exhausted the fluent speaker. However, he soon recovered, and, after a draught of cool water, thus proceeded:—

"Having secured the case, I brought it up with me. The lady had been too much concerned and afflicted to tell me where it was, so that when I arrived in Henley Street, where Mr. William Freeman lay dying, I found that John had been for a long time on tenter-hooks waiting for me, and not knowing what to think.

"However, my absence had been quite immaterial. The moribund had not stirred. He lay there still breathing gently, with his lips dark, his mouth slightly open, and his throat dry as a kiln, save when moistened with wine-and-water, or some cool jelly. Mr. Naylor was there; he seemed during the departing days of this poor man, to have no other business than to attend to him. Mrs. Naylor, a friend of the future administratrix, was also there, quietly chatting with her friend, and John Freeman, hated by—and I daresay

hating, too, at that time, although he was such a good fellow, everybody — kept his place stoutly by his dying father's bed.

"'By all that's good,' whispered John to me, 'I thought that you would never come.'

"'Well, I daresay it seemed a long time to you; but it didn't seem a moment to me,' said I, in a whisper. 'Any improvement in the patient?'

"'Not a bit,' returned John. 'Doctor says he may wake all of a sudden, quite sane, and, for a time, strong. *Then* he will gradually sink, poor fellow!'

"'Umph,' said I, '*then* will be the time for us. My dear boy, make up your mind to it all. He never was a good father.'

"'This is not the time to say so,' said John, turning away. You see, children see things differently from us.

"Suddenly Mr. William Freeman rallied. I never could make out how or why he did it. He became quite cheerful, said he should beat the doctors yet, scolded his nurses, grew cross, had an appetite, and saw as clearly as any man could—he was a clever man of the world—the feelings of all those around him. But clever people generally shoot ahead too far, and Mr. William Freeman made a grand mistake in reckoning his son amongst the ordinary run of selfish children. Bad as his father had been, the son loved him dearly.

"Every move, however, that the young man took, the old one—I say this to excuse him—put down to a selfish motive. The woman was quiet and passive; the young man was impulsive, quick, full of affection at one time, and of

coldness if repulsed. He went to the extreme length of bringing a clergyman to his father's bedside. The dying man raved at him and the priest alternately, until they departed.

"The next day he attested his will, after reading it carefully over, and the next morning, when no one was by him but the nurse, opened his eyes suddenly, started, and would have risen, only he was so weak and wasted; stared as if in great surprise, and knitted his brows in a troubled way, and then—died.

"'Died,' said his son, 'and made no sign.'

"'Yes,' said I, bitterly; 'but he has made a will, and the contents, if they are as you say, will simply bequeath a lawsuit to some one—to you, my poor boy.'

"It was as I said. John Freeman and his crippled brother followed their father to his grave, and then, coming back from his funeral, heard his will read. John said never a word, but his lips trembled. Mr. Naylor read the will, and placed it in the administratrix's hands.

"That lady began to weep. 'Poor fellow!' she said, 'he always did everything for the best. He could not carry on any more; his Irish lawsuit has eaten him up; there is only that little farm at Clayton left, and it would have broken his heart to have sold it. But I must do so; don't you think so, Mr. Naylor?'

"That gentleman shrugged his shoulders. 'There's Green and Jackson's bill of costs,' said he; 'I don't know how the estate will meet that.'

"'Come along, Ben,' said John Freeman; and without a word, morally shaking the dust off their feet, away the two sons went.

"'You see,' said John to me, 'we are beaten horse and foot. Never mind, Ben,' he continued, looking down on the poor fellow, 'I'm alive; I'm still *superstes. Deos quæso ut sim superstes;* and while *I* live, you are all right. I like work, I do, only I wish that the old governor had turned up a trump as his last card. And that will was made fourteen years ago, when we were helpless children. God forgive him.'

"When Mr. Naylor got home he quietly burnt all the duplicates of the will, and sat down to a strong cigar and a stronger glass of whisky-and-water. Mrs. Naylor was busy admiring her presents, for the administratrix had given her a fine old Queen Anne coffee-pot, worth I don't know how many shillings per ounce, a small salver, and one or two other articles of silver, all with the Freeman cypher upon them. Mr. Naylor had upon his finger an antique silver ring; and truly the goods of the defunct had been already partly shared.

"To make a long story short, Clayton Heath Farm was sold; but the lady who called herself the widow could not so easily get rid of sundry acres that Mr. Freeman had rented, and she therefore kept on a likely young countryman, too well educated for a labouring man, but too coarse in his tastes for anything else, as a bailiff. He was fresh-coloured and nice-looking, and as a matter of fact always pleasing in the eyes of his mistress, otherwise a low, cunning, coarse brute, and certainly pleasing to nobody else. He was put into mourning, with some other servants of Mr. Freeman, by whom he was looked on with perfect jealousy, notably by the groom, an older, cleverer, and better fellow

than he, who in a short time came up to town bringing some books from the library which William Freeman had—so the administratrix said—made her promise she would give his son.

"Somehow this groom hung about the room wherein John Freeman received him, and somehow recollections of the old home troubled John, and he gave the groom a little more brandy-and-water than he should have done, and took himself an extra glass or so of sherry.

"The wine opened the men's hearts—for grooms and poor gentlemen stand upon a nearer level than such fellows and rich gentlemen. There is, too, always a certain understood feeling of superiority with grooms over gentlemen. About horses at least, an animal concerning which all men would be learned, the groom knows most.

"'Sit down, Sam,' said John; 'the train you go by will let you have another half hour.'

"'Oh, Mas'r John,' said Sam, gulping the brandy-and-water, and pulling his forelock, 'I looked to have ridden behind you to the hunt with a second 'oss; an' blow me if the stable ain't empty under the Missus.'

"He jerked his thumb in the direction of Clayton Heath.

"'Ne'er a one in it, 'cept that fat old pony; she won't part with that, and ne'er a one on 'em would buy it, may be. Striver's been and sold 'em all, damn him. Oh, Mas'r John, I never look'd to see the day; and,' said the good fellow, wiping away a tear, 'you a workin' away as hard as any of us, no doubt, and you don't look well on it neither, 'cos you warn't born to it. And they has got it. That Striver's got the length of her fut, too. How was it you managed it so,

Mas'r John? You ought to a' bin at the head, you ought, you know.'

"People say that there is truth in wine. There is confidence at least; and the effect of a couple of glasses of sherry, added to the memories of the old home, showed themselves on John Freeman. He had a prodigious memory in some things; and in answer to Sam's earnest question: 'How was it you managed it so, Mas'r John?' he told the groom how it was, by simply repeating the will.

"In answer to this, the groom looked at him with all his eyes, as people say, and with 'all' of those organs certainly distinctly visible. 'Well,' said he, 'to be sure!' Then clapping his hand on the black knee cords, which were terminated with black gaiters, in honour of the deceased gentleman, he continued:—'The Governor were a cunning one, he were. He knew human natur, he did. He had a thought, had he? that the Missus might turn skittish an' kick over the traces. My eye, Mas'r John! how well your father did know womankind. Bear up your head; we arn't so far off the stable as you think.'

"Sam then put on his hat, with a cockade in it, a thing which he looked 'contemptibly at,' as he said, ''Cos the old Governor knew better than to make the groom of a civilian wear one,' and clapped it on his head. Then he winked at John Freeman, and shook his hand in all good fellowship, and, being a man of few words, bolted.

"Freeman stood at his door, and thought of the will; then, putting his hand wearily to his forehead, he set himself to work. He was an analytical chemist, and was rapidly rising in his profession, and his study needed a calm quiet, which

his father's death and will had somewhat disturbed. He looked at the books which the groom had brought—a handsome set of Hume and Smollett, in whole calf bindings, the prize of some college. He was glad to have them. They were a memorial of home, and bore his father's book-plate. He hoped that his sons would look at them as an heir-loom —a link connecting them with the past.

"'Well, gentlemen,' continued Mr. Bagsley, 'I must be getting towards the end.'

"The groom was as good as his intention, and better than his word. In a few weeks he came, on a Sunday, when Freeman and his wife were going to their quiet humble church, and, touching his hat, said that he wanted to say a few words to Mas'r John.

"'Go along to church, Annie,' John said; 'I must have a talk with this man.' Mrs. Freeman, a trusting and an obedient wife, to whom John was a compound of philosopher and angel, did as she was bidden, and the groom and John Freeman re-entered the house and sat down, facing each other, in the drawing-room.

"The sun was shining in the little garden, which stretched upwards from the house, a suburban modest building in a very modest neighbourhood, and the church bells were heard ringing sweetly in the distance. The two men were in black, and each looked earnestly into his fellow's face. The difference between them was this: Sam's face wore an air of confident triumph, while on Freeman's feeling and intellectual face sat not public, but private care, and an expression of sadness which rather annoyed the groom. That individual looked from Freeman to the table, then he looked at the

garden, then he pulled off his Berlin gloves, exhibiting a large coarse hand, and then he looked at the floor. John Freeman divined the cause.

"'What will you take, John,' said he, 'brandy-and-water, or ale!'

"'Your brandy's very good, Mas'r,' said Sam; 'we don't get such in our parts.'

"John rang the bell, and ordered tumblers and cold water. Then he looked at his watch, and then went into the next room, where the sideboard was, and came out with the liqueur-stand.

"Sam mixed for himself, took a good pull at some excellent cognac-and-water—for John Freeman, though poor, never put bad spirits before any man—and then, slapping down his open hand on the drawing-room table, so as to make the glass jingle, lifted it up, and symbolically caught a fly. 'Mas'r John,' said he, 'the game's yours, if you know how to play it. The old mare has kicked over the traces.'

"It is useless for me to tell you all the intermediate steps. The administratrix and the bailiff, Striver, were living as man and wife, without the preliminary ceremony which makes such a proceeding respectable. John Freeman consulted me, and, having arranged matters with the groom, we went together—I and John only—to Mr. Naylor, and claimed Freeman's rights. Mr. Naylor laughed at us. How could we prove this? the groom might be suborned, and Mrs. Freeman—thus he termed the unhappy woman—might be merely suffering from the spite of a servant whom he knew she was about to discharge. You see that Mr. Naylor was faithful to his client.

" John Freeman turned round and looked gloomily at the solicitor, who was seated in one of his easy chairs, with his elbows on the arms thereof, tapping his nails together, and smiling in that bland way in which a man who knows that he has a game to play does smile. I had gone to the French bookcase, determined to hide my own feelings, and sincerely anxious that John should not show his.

"'So you think we cannot rely upon our informant, Mr. Naylor?' said John.

"'Common rumour,' returned Naylor; 'and as your lamented father said—he was a man of the world, and no one knew the world better than my friend Freeman—as he used to say, "Common rumour is a notorious liar."'

"'Well, then, all we can do is to wait,' said John. 'I have waited many a long year to see if my father's miserable injustice would be remedied, and I can wait a year or so longer.'

"'There's no hurry, I assure you,' said Naylor, with a peculiar grin; just the sort of grin that you see on a sickly green pond when it curdles. John, I knew, could have throttled him, but said nothing, only bade the solicitor good evening, and, leaving me to express myself with more apparent cordiality, we lounged out.

"'Thank God, it's too late for the post, John; and that all the telegraph wires are down with the snow. We must get to Clayton Heath to-night.' Those were the words I said, after walking leisurely, and with our heads down, like defeated men, past the window of the solicitor, against which he was flattening his plastic nose, as usual.

"'By jingo,' said John, 'it was lucky that I took your

advice, and reserved my call till the evening. Here, let's have a cab.'

"In a few minutes we were at home, and told Mrs. Freeman of our journey; in a few more minutes we were on our way to a late train; and after chartering two miserable ponies to carry us part of the way, a dreary nine miles, heavy with snow, towards Clayton Heath, we found ourselves at the 'Pied Bull,' a dreary little public about a mile from the old farm-house, in which lay the guilty pair. The farm-house had been sublet to Striver, and Mrs. Freeman had removed from a shooting-box, in which Freeman had lived, a few fields away from the larger residence, where he thought of retrenching, and was preparing to quietly go out of the world.

"It was nearly four o'clock, for we had purposely stayed some time at ———, where the groom met us, before we got on to the Heath, and knocked at the 'Pied Bull.' We were answered by a gruff voice from an opened casement, and a nasty looking blunderbuss. There had been some talk of robbery thereabouts, and perhaps some real ones, and the sight of the protruding barrel gave me an unpleasant cold tremour all down my back, since it was accompanied by a rough oath and the click of the cock. Freeman pulled me back. 'Higgins,' he cried out to the landlord, 'don't be a fool; I'm Mr. Freeman.'

"'It's Mas'r John, Benjamin,' said the groom, who had prudently got behind us both.

"The blunderbuss was withdrawn, and the door soon opened, and, wet-footed as we were, we were glad to rest in the kitchen, where the fire was soon raked into a blaze, and we sat down, with the groom, to a comfortable breakfast of very

coarse coffee and very good bacon. Our plan was to proceed at about six to the house, and to obtain an entrance somehow; so that we ourselves might catch the parties *flagrante delicto*.

"'It's a delicate business for a young gentleman who expects soon to be called,' said I. ''Tis nothing more nor less than flat burglary; but we must do it, John.'

"John laughed. His spirits were high and rose with the occasion. 'I can understand,' he said, 'how a cracksman must feel. It must be like hunting, by jingo! Well, we'll soon turn up our game.'

"As the night, or rather the morning, wore on, Sam, the groom, began to be more quiet, and asked whether the servant and he would not do as witnesses; but I sternly said no. Then he tried to dissuade us from going forward in the matter. 'Striver,' he said, 'had moved the deed-box and the plate-chest into the bed-room, and kept firearms on a table by the bedside; thereto moved by the theatrical experience of Mrs. Freeman, who somewhat feared John. Striver was a man who drank rather freely, and who would not mind putting a bullet into any one, especially as he would be in his own rights, as the farm had been rented by him now for a month or so.'

"In spite of this reluctance, which even brandy could not overcome, Mr. Freeman persuaded Sam to come with him as far as the farm. And it was lucky that he did so. But when he got so far, he fairly 'funked,' and fell, in a tremble of foolish fear, at Freeman's knees.

"'Oh,' said he, 'pray don't go on, Sir. I dreamt last night that Striver shot you.'

"'Dreams won't hinder me,' said Freeman, cheerfully. 'Our family never give up when we are once on the scent. Just get us into the house, and then you may run home to the "Bull" as quickly as you can. Here's a sovereign. *I* won't split on you, if it comes to the worst; but it is not going to turn out bad, I tell you.'

"'I shall never forget it,' said the narrator. 'We stood close together, under the shadow of a fine laurel tree, which Freeman had planted some years ago, and which had flourished wonderfully since; whispering in the shadow, looking up silently to the gables of the old farm-house—which had been a manor-house in Henry VIIIth's time—and carefully consulting how to enter it. It looked very like burglary. No wonder the groom 'funked,' as Freeman phrased it.

"'The servants?' asked John.

"'There's only one,' said the groom. 'The cook's sent away.'

"'Where does the girl sleep?'

"The groom pointed to a little window, and suddenly stooped down and picked up some gravel. The morning—it was about six o'clock, and the day was, of all days in the year, the day before Christmas—was as black as my hat. The moon had gone down, but a rift in the clouds let one bright star twinkle on the top casement, with the faintest possible reflection, and we took that for an omen. The gravel was canted lightly against the window, and to our delight a candle was soon seen to burn in the room. Then we all crept behind the laurel tree, and waited.

"The light burned for a little while. The girl was evidently preparing to come downstairs; and the groom's terror increased.

"'I'm no use now, Mas'r John,' said he. 'I may go now.'

"'Yes,' said Freeman, glad to get rid of him. 'We will do this by ourselves. Mind and wait for us at the Bull.'

"Our stable-minded friend sneaked off in the darkness, and we crept up to the front door on seeing the light disappear. The girl was evidently coming downstairs. Suddenly the bolts were softly withdrawn, and the great chain let down. The girl opened the door, and John Freeman sprang in, caught her round the waist, and put his hand over her mouth. 'Don't scream,' he cried, 'nor be frightened. I'm John Freeman.'

"Well, the girl, who knew John's face and form, so like that of her dead master, did not scream, but, on the contrary, proved a very efficient aid, after she had gone down on her knees, to beg us to give up our purpose. Finding us set on it, she told us that our surmises were correct; 'but,' said she, 'Mr. Striver gets up early, about seven, and comes down with his gun, just to knock over a rabbit or so in the dark. If he finds you here, he will shoot you, as sure as fate. He has been talking about you with the Missus, and he does not quite suspect this ga*mut*, but *she* does.'

"'He won't find us *here*,' said I; 'we will find him *there*.'

"'You can't do it,' she said. 'The bedroom door is

doubly locked and bolted; and when the men come to the barn to thresh out, he opens the window, and chucks out the key to them. How, then, are you to get in?'

"This puzzled us. 'Never mind,' said Freeman, calmly; 'go and light the kitchen fire; we will wait and see. There is nothing stirring now.'

"All this conversation was carried on in a low tone; not quite in a whisper, for we were far away from where our enemies lay sleeping. Freeman took out his purse, and gave the girl some money. 'In any case,' he said, 'you shall be paid for letting us into the house.'

"The servant took the money, and was very quiet and obedient. I have every reason to suppose that she had been told of the matter by the groom, for whom she had a particular friendship.

"Then for nearly an hour she left us alone. I was quite silent, revolving in my mind the curious chances which, out of friendship for Freeman, had brought me there. We were not armed, he having only a stout walking-stick, and I nothing more formidable than a penknife; but we had courage, and doubted nothing. I never saw any one more cool than John: he was engaged in making an inventory of the contents of the old parlour, which had been refurnished exactly as he had known it in his father's lifetime.

"'Freeman,' said I, 'had not one of us better look to that girl?'

"'No!' he returned, quickly; 'I can read a woman's face. She will do you no harm, and you may be at peace, and trust her.'

"He was quite right. In a few minutes, before we could hear anything in that silent house, the servant came, and said to John—

"'You may look out now; they are stirring.'

"The kitchen, in fact, a large and antique room, was under the chamber in which our enemies were 'located,' as the Yankees say. We both rose, and my heart beat a little; but Freeman was as cool as if he were going to hand a lady down to dinner. He took the light from the girl, and shaded it with his hands; and presently we heard a voice calling the servant. It was that of Mrs. Freeman, who called her to give out the keys of the barn.

"We crept to the stair foot, and heard, with quickened ears, the retreating steps of the woman after she had given out the keys, and, to our joy, we also heard that the chamber door was not again locked.

"'Now's the time,' said Freeman, doing what seemed to me an act of madness, but what, in his generous fashion, was intended to shield the girl from any blame. 'Now's the time,' said he, knocking at the open street door, and angrily demanding to see the mistress; and then, as if pushing the servant away, he rushed up stairs, candle in hand, and I after him. He went up like lightning, and in a moment we were at the chamber door.

"'You well know me,' cried he, 'and I know you, Mr. Striver. I'm Mr. John Freeman!'

"The rest of the story would weary you. We won all before us. We carried down Mr. Striver's pistols and gun, and

unloaded them; and he and the lady gave up the game. We brought up all the plate; and that evening, or rather afternoon, we sought Mr. Naylor. That gentleman was penitent, and his wife was horrified. We—I and John—both knew enough about law to see that Naylor could aid us thoroughly, or could puzzle us terribly; and therefore I, at John's request, wrung from him by his friends, asked him to act for him.

"'You know,' said I, 'that nothing would suit you better, Mr. Naylor, than a Chancery suit; but we don't want it. If the executrix will aid us, we will not seek to remove her.'

"The astute Naylor promised all that we asked, and then John set about his honest courses. He reversed that part of the will which had left his sister and brother destitute, sold the plate and commenced paying the little creditors, not one of whom had been paid, and trusted to realize the large sum of about twelve thousand pounds, owing as a judgment debt on property provided for on the estates in Ulster of a certain Irish marquis. He made Striver marry the woman, thus returning in some sort good for evil, and gave her almost all the furniture of the old house to set her forward in a right course, when Mr. Naylor made his appearance with a long bill of costs from Stevens and Price, against the estate of William Freeman for certain Irish law-work. 'This,' said Naylor, 'must be paid, and the parties would not wait. We must,' continued Naylor authoritatively, 'sell the judgment debt, and I have got a purchaser in the next debtor to your father's on the Marquis's estates, the National Hibernian Bank.'

"Well, John naturally refused to sell, and Naylor seemed

to acquiesce, when all of a sudden Freeman was served with notice to appear to answer an action of trover, and was forced to pay all the moneys received from his father's plate, &c., into the Irish Chancery court, where he took action. He had to pay also to Naylor, solicitor to the executrix, a like amount; for although the English judges—three solemn, not to say, feeble fellows—seemed to feel, if they ever do feel, that he had done just what an honourable man would do, yet a man has no right to right himself, you know. He won all in Ireland, when the heir of the Marquis was stirred up to resist payment, and Naylor and the executrix sold the debt for three thousand —a debt worth ten thousand—golden sovereigns. This brought us into an action to upset the transaction, which the Irish Master in Chancery pronounced utterly fraudulent; but Naylor commenced a cross suit at the English Chancery, and there was a conflict of courts. Whatever the Irish court said the English court gainsaid. For eight years my unfortunate client went on working as a chemist to gain money to pay his costs. Often has he paid some celebrated man at the bar to lead, and has had to fight the battle with me as a junior, and I unhappily had not the ear of the court. At last John Freeman was tired out; what the Master of the Rolls said a higher court unsaid; and thus bandied from court to court, he had at last nothing left but the Lords to appeal to—six hundred pounds down, and three old gentlemen, two of whom have previously decided against you, to reconsider the verdict of the lower court. 'You've fought the battle for eight years, John,' I told him; 'Naylor has swallowed, as we well know, two thousand pounds of the money paid in; you will

have to sue the executrix, who is now with a drunken husband in a workhouse, or next door to it. Leave off, John; you are a brave man, if an unfortunate one. You are not rich; in fact, you have not a five-pound note to fold up with its fellow, thanks to the law; but while God gives you health you will never be a poor man. So my advice is, that you quietly put up with the loss, and go on working in your own noble way. After all, life, which is made up of trials and vexations, must be taken as it comes to us—not as a triumph; too often as a defeat.'

"John Freeman took my advice, and put up with the loss. Strong and good as he was, a few more years would have sent him to the madhouse. He is now a celebrated chemist, though still a young man, with his hair streaked with grey; and every grey hair he owes to the Solicitor's Window, through which Mr. Naylor still peers at coming clients; a prosperous man, for I hear that his theatrical wife, herself proud and stout, rides in her brougham. Gentlemen, I have done. Every word that I have uttered is true;—and I have not said half that I could say against the law."

Mr. Bagsley here ceased, amidst general applause.

"By George," said Carew, swearing by his patron saint, "will no one arise to slay this hydra of the law?"

"My dear young sir," said the old gentleman, Mr. Corner, "how can you expect to have it any better? What unphilosophical animals are men! You educate and train solicitors to cheat you, you make their livelihood depend upon their cunning; you separate law and equity, you write your laws in an ignorant jargon of arbitrary terms, which no two men

understand alike; and then you cry out and say what wretched fellows such men as 'Naylor and Co.,' and 'Quirk, Gammon, and Snap,' and 'the rest of the fraternity' are. Why, you might as well blame the foxhound for being a capital dog in a pack, after you have been all your life training him to hunt."

"Good," grunted Carew, meditating on the story; "and now let us go on with the next window."

# THE WINDOW UPON WHEELS.

THINK," said a little round and somewhat red man, red in his hair, in his eyes, in a foxy complexion—one who gave you an idea of redness, but of whose existence we had as yet been apparently unconscious—"I think that it is my turn now to take you gentlemen to a window you have not yet peeped in."

"That's capital!" said Carew. "I see you are now all entering into the spirit of the evening."

"Yes," said the little red gentleman, pushing his fingers through the red hair, abundantly streaked with grey; "when I've a thing to do, I do it; and so here goes for my story." Then, having settled himself comfortably in his chair, and looking into the end of his long cherry-stick pipe, as if he saw therein what he narrated, he commenced slowly, thus:—

"The first time I saw him, it was under disadvantageous circumstances, and he did not look so big as he was.

"I don't know whether any of you gentlemen,"—the red gentleman who was telling the story was very precise—"ever had the kind of hankering that I have after one of those pretty little painted houses, with neat blinds, small windows, yellow wooden sides spick and span, picked out with red

styles, that are pulled about the country on wheels, and are seemingly always inhabited by a fat woman, matronly and comfortable, and a gentleman in a fustian jacket and overalls. I suppose all boys like those little houses. Well, my love for them continued long after boyhood, and I was a man, full grown, on the road to making a fortune, when I took it into my head that I would buy one.

"I was in the wine trade, wholesale, and one of my customers had been foolish enough to run away to America largely in my debt, leaving a very excellent stock of wines and spirits and a newly-established tavern on my hands. This would have broken anybody else's back, but it didn't mine.

"I looked at the books of my levanting friend, and I found that what Shakspere had said long ago was quite right, especially where applied to publicans—'There *is* a tide in the affairs of men.' I don't exactly know whether he emphasised that 'is,' or, as you literary gents would do, printed it in italics, but this I do know, that he ought to have done so. There *is* a tide, and just at the turn of that tide my friend had lost head and heart, and had bolted instead of calling on me and telling me how matters stood. When I came to investigate affairs, *I* saw that the tide was upon the turn, and that Jack Spiggot had run away from making his fortune.

"'What did I do?' you will say. Well, I'll tell you. I carried on the 'public' for a time, simply because I could get nobody to take it off my hands. Whenever I assured a likely man that there was a fortune to be made, he shook his head with a knowing smile, as much as to say, 'No, no, Mr. Edgehill; you're a clever fellow, but, if there *is* a fortune to

be made, why don't you make it to your own hand.' So I was forced to carry on what I knew was a promising concern, and I did so very successfully, until I put it all right and flourishing into the hands of the returned and repentant Jack Spiggott himself. Poor Jack," said the wine merchant, looking as sentimental as one of his physique could, into the end of his pipe, "I *killed* him!"

"Killed him!" cried Felix, with a start, wondering that Mr. Edgehill should combine charity with cruelty.

"Yes," said the narrator; "the truth is, that when Jack came back, and had a fortune put into his hands, instead of being thrown into jail, he was so penetrated with gratitude, that what with hard work, what with excitement, what with determination to pay off his debt of gratitude, and what with a peculiarly fine growth of champagne that I picked up abroad (I bought the whole vintage, but could get nobody except me and Jack to believe in it, because I did not forge a brand), what with these, I say, Jack Spiggott drank himself into an early grave, leaving me—for he had no chick nor child—a little fortune of ten thousand pounds and his blessing. Poor Jack! I made him a happy man, and I'm sure he returned the compliment with a benefit. It's extraordinary," said the wine merchant by way of a note, "what good fellows men are, if you will only treat them as they ought to be treated.

"Well, you see," continued Mr. Edghill, "it was 'along of,' as the country people have it, it was 'all along of' Jack Spiggott and his large public-house, with a large music-hall attached, doing so many butts a week, and altogether a thriving concern, that I saw this particular window upon wheels.

"I was nearly worn out; for happily everything had turned out well, and Jack had come home, and was working like an eternally grateful steam-engine; the only trouble he seemed to have, poor fellow, was that under which he died—his gratitude to me. That overweighted him. Well, away I went into the country to refresh myself, and I was taking a turn down at St. Alban's—a curious old place, to be sure—where I saw the very thing I had been looking after for sale.

"There it was—small windows, wooden sides, yellow, picked out with red styles, all spick and span, green door, brass knocker, and some white painted steps, which invited you to walk up.

"I did walk up, especially as I saw in one of the little windows, 'To be sold; also a good cart-horse, and harness.' 'Here,' said I to myself, 'is a treat. I will leave the wine trade for three weeks, buy this, stock it with eggs, legs of mutton, and choice provisions in tins, and roam about the country, camping out where I like.'

"By the time I had made this resolution I had got to the top of the stairs, and there it was that I saw *him*.

"He was lying the whole length of the van, and yet he was bent in the middle. There was a curtain, to be sure, to hide him from the public gaze, but it was undrawn, and there he lay. I only caught a glimpse of him, however, for his friends quickly hid him from my view, with the curtain.

"I was so astonished that I forgot what I came for; our friend was so preciously long and big that I could not conceive how they got him into my snug little home, for I had already begun to consider it mine.

"'What have you got there?' said I, to a sharp young man with rough hair and ferrety eyes, 'a giant!'

"'Yes, it's a giant; and if you want to see him, you must pay a shilling at least, for a private interview.'

"'Don't want to see him,' said I. 'What I want is to buy this van.'

"The young person with the ferrety eyes whistled, as much as to say, 'Hookey, Walker!' which was a favourite phrase in those days; and then standing before an opening in the curtains, so as to deprive me of just about half an inch of the giant's trousers, he said: 'Well, if so be as that's the case, you must come and see Mr. Smithers at the "Peacock," in the High Street; for he's gone to Barnet, and won't be back till six.' About seven Mr. Ferret supposed Mr. Smithers would treat with me. As he closed his speech, his companion gave a pull at the 'street' door, which caused it to fly open and to make a series of double knocks; and I, after a glance at the outward world through the window upon wheels, went my way, promising to call on Mr. Smithers at seven, at the hotel called the 'Peacock.'

"The glance I had of the inside of the caravan made me more determined than ever to possess it: it looked so comfortable, if it had not been uncomfortably crowded by the giant, his two friends, and myself. I pictured to myself the sweet hedgerows of England, the steady old horse pulling along at the rate of three miles an hour, the country carts passing us, the afternoon siesta and the pipe, the jolly nights under some gigantic way-side oak, with the wind roaring above me and the rest in some quiet sunny country town.

"Punctually at seven, I went to the 'Peacock' in search

of Mr. Samuel Smithers, and there it was that I saw *him* again. Mr. Smithers, a stout, greasy-looking gentleman, with a sleeve-waistcoat, and in corduroys, was sitting in a chair, sipping rum-and-water, and smoking, while he tried to look indifferent as to the success of his interview. Do all he could, however, he could not succeed. Mr. Smithers was very much down on his luck, and even the giant was depressed.

"He was standing in the middle of the room, leaning in an elegant and *dégagé* way, with his forearm pressing against the ceiling, by which he steadied himself. As I entered the room, the first thing that I heard was, 'Well, there's no help for it, I suppose; we must take the long 'un back to the little island.'

"To cut a long story somewhat shorter," continued Mr. Edgehill, putting his little finger into the bowl of his pipe to feel whether it was alight or not, "I soon got interested in that giant, and I found that Mr. Smithers had been deeply interested in him too, and that was the reason that the two pretty little windows, the door, and the knocker, and the wooden house on wheels were for sale.

"'You see,' said Smithers, 'these two young countrymen, they are Manx men, and such rum 'uns, that I never want to meet their like again; nor Jersey men either; nor any such-like islanders.'

"The party with the ferrety eyes looked rather dark at this, but Mr. Smithers did not heed the looks.

"'They are,' said he, 'as cunning as a couple of lawyers' clerks when the governor has defaulted, and they are carrying on business to pay theirselves above board, and live

under the rose. You see they are cousins of his'n, and have got a share in him, and consequently they go with him; and as giants ain't no pay nowadays, they and him are eatin' me out of house an' home. I don't want to sell the wan, if so be I could get rid of the giant.'

"'Well, I'll tell you what it is: *he* hasn't got a tongue in his head—leastways, not one as is any good to him,' said the ferrety gentleman, nodding at the giant, who looked calmly down from the ceiling upon all of us, 'and I will speak for him. He's worth fifty pound a week, is he not, governor? Fifty pound a week and his keep?'

"I looked up at my mild friend, and found myself insensibly drawn to him. I was short and he was so very big—so uselessly big. If the gentleman with the red eyes had said he was worth a hundred pounds a week, I should not have had the heart to contradict him—at any rate, in the presence of the giant himself.

"'Yes, he is,' said I, slowly revolving in my mind what to do with him. A spell seemed to hang over me; he was so tall, so amiable, and, for a wonder, so well made, and so gracious too, smiling down on us. An idea flashed upon me. I would make Jack Spiggott's fortune.

"'Yes, he is,' I again said slowly, rubbing my chin meanwhile.

"'Thank you, sir,' said the giant, mildly; 'I think I will sit down now. I find it hot up here when the gas is lighted.'

"'Will you give fifty a week for him?' said his ferrety cousin; 'any one who knows the ropes well would make a hundred.' The young man seemed to be entirely given up to the one idea of making money; and, I dare say, although

he clung like a leech to the unfortunate Smithers, fortune was at a low ebb with that limited liability company, the whole capital paid up of which was a young, mild giant.

"'Giants is a bad spec,' said the unfortunate Smithers.

"'You're a fool to say so,' snapped the ferrety fellow; 'a blessed fool anyhow, just when the gent was a-goin' to make a bid.'

"'Yes, for my house, though,' returned Smithers, smoothing his dirty hand down his greasy sleeve-waistcoat. 'I only wish that the public took a little interest in 'em, but they won't. They won't walk up now to any one more strange than the pig-faced lady, with a real silver trough. I saw a handsome woman t'other day as would have nearly done for one; howsomever, if you're goin' to travel the country I dare say you could get one.'

"'What!' said I, startled out of my silence; 'a pig-faced lady!'

"'You can get anything for advertisin',' returned Smithers; 'any sort o' talent, curious or not. Just look at this paper,' said he, holding up the *Era;* 'that's the place to find talent, or curiosities; anything you can find there—lashins of it; but you won't find a better giant in the world than what he is, nor one more properer, nor soberer, nor better tempereder, although *I have* dropped my money on him.'

"The giant, as he heard this eulogy, held out his hand to Smithers, and took the whole of his hand and forearm in his gigantic paw. 'Never mind, old fellow,' said he, 'you couldn't help it. The fact is, I'm too big for you; you want more money to work me.'

"'That he does,' said the ferret. 'Now, it seems to me

that the gent has made up his mind. What will he give for the giant per week? £50 is not dear; he owns to as much hisself.'

"'No,' said I, wondering at the talent that our red-eyed young friend had for reading character; 'no, it is not.'

"'You think we ought to get it?'

"'Yes; and I think you will get it, but not from me,' said I, reverting in my thoughts to Jack Spiggott,—'now I will tell you what I will give you. If you bring that gentleman to London, where his true market lies, and let him come to the —— Music Hall and Terpischorean Entertainment, for one hour every evening, from eight till nine, I'll give him ten pounds a week. He will have all the rest of the day and night to himself, and it's odd if he can't pick up the £40 somehow.'

"Well, to make a long story short, as I said, the giant jumped at the offer, and the ferrety cousin, after some long preamble, agreed to have the terms drawn up in black and white. As for Mr. Smithers, he was so pleased that he declared that he would now not part with the caravan, but stock it with a select assortment of kitchen utensils, and start due north after Barnet Fair. As that was fixed for the next month, I had time before me, and I agreed with Smithers for the loan of his house for £2 per week, covenanting to give his old horse two feeds of corn per day and treat him well.

"Next morning we started for London, and I introduced the giant to Jack Spiggott. He was already doing a good trade, and all that he wanted was something, as he said, to pull the people in a little early. He had a chair built for the giant, and all that he had to do was to come in at

eight o'clock to the Hall of Terpsichore and walk about as a stranger. Then you should have seen the tall men and short men, tall women and short women, measure themselves by him. When he was tired he would sit down, and then the notion seemed to possess everybody that they must sit near him and treat him.

"'You'll take a glass of wine,' said one, after talking with him.

"'I shall be very happy,' he would say, bowing; for he was a very polite young fellow.

"'What shall it be?' then the young fellows would ask; and of course the giant would answer, 'Champagne, if you please, gents.' When people heard one cork fly, another would soon follow, I can tell you; and, to be sure, if the giant had not been a most abstemious fellow he would have drunk himself to death. As it was, he took my advice, dined plainly but well at six o'clock, ate 'considerable,' as the Americans say, of rice-pudding without sugar, and stuck to his champagne. When I left him, after three days, in Jack Spiggott's possession, he was as happy as a king."

"'What had he been?' asked Felix, interrupting Mr. Edgehill.

"'There you have it,' said the narrator, smiling.

"Everybody wanted to know what he was, and how he grew so long. As far as I knew or could learn, he was the son of ordinary parents, poor farming people in the Isle of Man. He grew and grew and grew. He ate them out of house and home, and his bright cousin—the one with the ferret countenance, you may be sure—suddenly proposed to utilise him by taking him to England for a show. Somehow

or other the only notion they ever had of a show was confined to the small house upon wheels; hence the poor giant's miserable condition at the time of my first acquaintance with him.

"He was a most amiable young fellow, and no fool. Everybody liked him, and the presents he got were innumerable, some of them very valuable. Why people should give watches and chains to giants, and dwarfs, and such like, I don't know, but they did: we have an example in her Majesty the Queen. He had a manner of drawing one to him, and it was amusing to see little men, when they were talking, first get on a chair, and then on a table to reach his ear.

"It soon got abroad—for we did not of course condescend so far as to advertise him—that a young gentleman of fortune, a real giant, used to spend his evenings at the Terpsichorean Hall, and from that day forward the place was crammed. Jack had only to sell good wine, and to take the money, and his fortune was made. I need not tell you that the honest fellow did both, and at the end of the month made the giant a present of a five-pound note over and above his agreed salary.

"Poor fellow, I wish he had stayed there till now! Unfortunately, some Frenchmen came to see him, and after many a long palaver with a lawyer and the red-eyed cousin, my young Manx giant went over to France, where the living did not agree with him. They paid him sixty pounds a week —part of which he regularly sent to his parents—and provided him with some magnificent dresses. Sometimes he was the *sapeur* of a grenadier regiment, sometimes a gigantic Mameluke. He made, or would have made, a fortune for his

cousins, and the showmen as well, but, as I told you, the French cookery did not agree with him, and he died at Orleans; and bless me," said Mr. Edgehill, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, "if his cousin didn't sell his skeleton to some French museum."

"By jingo!" cried Carew, "I did not like to interrupt you before, but I saw that giant at Fontainebleau. They told me that he was a Norman, and gave me a long pedigree."

"Those Frenchmen will say anything," said Scumble. "But what about the house upon wheels? To have a month or so in one has been the dream of my life."

"It was wonderfully jolly," said the stout little gentleman, with a dry cough, as he lit his pipe, "in idea. As you travelled along, the carriage creaked and groaned, and the infernal little knocker worked like a mad postman. Then the advance was not quick enough for me, and the fireplace not large enough to cook anything larger than an egg and a rasher of bacon. Then, too, the walls of my house were not so well closed against the wind; the crannies let in rain and damp, and in fact the weather was not so fine as it might have been. Add to this, my friend and chum who was to have accompanied me, disappointed me. In short, the journey did not quite come up to *my* expectations; but I paid Mr. Smithers at the end of the month, meeting him just before Barnet Fair, and was as glad to get out of his house as he was to get into it. But I shall never regret having walked up the steps of that queer little hutch, nor shall I ever forget my first peep at the young giant's legs behind the curtain."

## A WINDOW BY THE SEASIDE.

THE reader of these desultory sketches may suppose that some time has elapsed since our friends last met in Carew's rooms, and that Felix, his wife and baby, have grown relatively older, and, as a matter of course, happier. The holiday has passed quietly enough, and Felix has, in company with his mentor, passed through a good many scenes in this gigantic town, which some people delight in calling the vast metropolis, and others, "the little village."

At the next meeting of the Society of Sketchers, no one was particularly surprised to find an addition to the number of auditors and possible talkers. This was a young gentleman of "some five and twenty summers," as the novelists say, although why they say "some," and why they leave out the winters, is equally a mystery to the writer. He wore spectacles, and was evidently short-sighted, perhaps in more senses than one. He was not very broad-chested, and, after the fashion of our modern young men, he wore very tight trousers, which made his knees and his feet look big. He had been to college, and had thereat assumed or caught a certain method of speaking which all young Oxonions have, which

detracted from an otherwise agreeable voice, the sound of which vibrated on the ear of Felix pleasantly enough.

Our young gentleman, who was habited in the fashionable "cutaway" coat, and who wore a cascade of satin before his manly breast, had very little *mauvais honte*, and indeed gave his opinions *aplomb*, without mincing matters, and without any exceptional deference to his elders. Old Mr. Corner looked at him with widely opened eyes when flatly contradicted on a certain point, with the slightest possible "pardon me" just indicated, and Felix felt that our new acquaintance was treading upon dangerous ground when he absolutely bearded George Carew. To him alone did he show any deference, but amongst his set, Mr. Stanton—such was his name, with Greville put before it by his godfathers and godmothers, on purpose to prove how much and how thoroughly they fulfilled their asserted intention of abandoning all the pomps and vanities of this wicked world—was looked up to, and he took little trouble to look up to others.

Our young friend, who was an engineer in some vast concern which employed a few thousands of men, and undertook works which ran away with millions of pounds sterling, seemed so thoroughly to look at all matters as small by the side of the immense works with which he was accustomed to deal, that it is no wonder that his behaviour in the little circle we have introduced him to was somewhat *nonchalant*. Mr. Scumble, who admired his liege lord George Carew, and Felix were both amused and somewhat scandalized at his conduct.

"I have heard of your evenings," he said to the host, "from my friend Bagsley, who has given me a sketch of them; and,

in my opinion, you have hit upon a very sensible way of spending the time. Parties now-a-days are so slow."

"I quite agree with you," grunted George, looking at him askance; "and I'm sure that we are all here much obliged for your approval. We want something like that, you know, to back us up in our own opinion."

Felix and Scumble looked at each other as much as to say, "Ha! he had him there;" but Mr. Stanton merely lifted up his chin, and looked fixedly at Carew through his spectacles.

Spectacles give a man a strange sort of power, and Carew instinctively disliked them. He was a great observer of faces, and, as he said, those "gig lamps" prevented him from seeing the effect of what he said upon the person to whom he was saying it. He likened them to gig lamps, because, he said to Scumble, "they bother you so at a distance, Scumble; you fancy them nearer to you than they really are, and after your eyes have grown thoroughly accustomed to the darkness, you are dazzled by a flaring monster dashing past you and nearly taking your off-wheel off, whereas if the beggar did not put up his lamps you would be on the look-out, and the two traps would each keep to their own side, and pass each other with a cheery, 'Yo ho!'"

The small sarcasm, as we have said, fell harmless upon Mr. Stanton's spectacles. He looked up, and continued his mild speech, probing anybody he was talking to as coolly as a scientific doctor probes a patient, and with as little apparent feeling.

"Yes, it is a good thing, because parties are so awfully dull, and one cannot always sit at a club, nor can one for ever

play at billiards; and then the fellows of the present day have quite lost the art of talking. I suppose it was quite different in your time?" This he said pointedly to Carew.

"Hang it, young sir!" said Scumble, brushing up his hair with his hand, so as to make it stand up in a Brutus-like and defiant shock. "Hang it, George Carew is a young man still, and is not your grandfather."

"Oh, indeed!" returned Stanton, coolly.

"Well, yes it was," said Carew, looking down the zealous, the too zealous, Cimabue; "yes, it was quite different. I recollect, when I walked round Hanover Square with Mr. Pitt, the Square was then unplanted, posts and rails (*vide* Mr. Timbs's *Curiosities of London*), and the late Minister's statue, did not adorn it; I recollect that we discussed the character of single-speech Hamilton, and we then lamented the gradual falling off in conversation. 'Now, when Johnson, Burke, and that brilliant coterie,' said Pitt to me——"

Stanton looked with some surprise at Carew, while the company burst out into an uncontrollable fit of laughter, not so much at the story as at George's dry way of relating it. It seemed, indeed, as if he were speaking from the most positive recollection.

"A very nice roast," said old Mr. Corner, bowing to George, who had told him in the course of the evening that his MS. was accepted, and it may be supposed that he was all the more ready to support his friend. "A very nice roast, indeed! Upon my word, I thought we were going to have some interesting history of a descendant of the great Pitt."

"By Jove!" said Mr. Stanton, taking off his spectacles, "you did not do that badly. But you fellows, who marry

early and have tall children, and all that sort of thing, do seem so old to us bachelors."

"Ah!" said George, with a sigh, thinking of his too short married life, "if 'us bachelors' would but be wise, and marry as early as we did, you would not trouble yourselves with thinking about youth and age, and all that sort of thing. Why, when a man lives, let him live. Do we look at the clock every minute when we are happy? Do we count the moments when we are engaged in an exciting chase, in a battle, or in a noble action? Do we pull out our watch every half-hour when we are in love, and when we are close to the pretty girl we love, pressing her rounded arm close to those happy ribs, against which our heart is beating as if to get out to fuller happiness?"

> "'How heedless falls the foot of time,
> That only treads on flowers,'"

chirped Cimabue, getting out of his chair in a rapture.

"By Jove!" drawled Stanton, "I say, that's plucky though; a very good speech, almost as good as a bit of comedy at the Prince of Wales's Theatre."

But as this part of the night was given over to conversation, and Stanton began to know the company more, much of his manner wore off, and George Carew's whispered determination to make the young fellow take part, and the first part, in their entertainment was easily brought about. Strange to say, Stanton was no snob. He defended things which men of his class called vulgar, and in an earnest conversation with Mr. Corner, who at first deemed him an insufferable puppy, he gave his opinion freely in favour of the

middle class, which has lately been treated so thoroughly *de haut en bas* by the *Satinwove Review*, and other wonderful prints which set their clocks by that of the great leader.

"No," said he, "I don't dislike them so much, nor do I think them such fools for not following the examples of their betters, as they call themselves, and racing half over the Continent. I have been there, and still would go; but there are charms in English watering-places which far transcend the foreign affairs we hear so much about from people who are only too delighted to show other people that they have been there."

"Bravo!" said Carew, and the talk, which was general, became particular or singular, but not eccentric; "and then a fellow does get tired of town, and does not know enough of his own country, beautiful as it always is."

"By Jove, yes," returned Stanton. "Tired! I should think so. Champagne in decanters, Herodotus, in the version of Beloe, Croker's notes to Boswell's 'Johnson,' minced veal, and kissing one's own sister, have been cited as parallels of dulness and synonyms for flatness—for that languid, slow-pulsed feeling we should all experience were life without its follies, and day followed day, devoted solely to business, and shorn of its humours and excitements. To men in towns, who live a life of turbid turmoil, this change is as necessary as it is to the gentle homekeeper, to vary his monotonous life by visits to the plays, to parties, to the Zoological Gardens, the game of croquet, and the feast on tea and cake, with City magnates, on some alderman's lawn. Such delights, for which, on Sundays, as a variation, the High Church curate hints at penance, and the Low Church

incumbent prophesies a severer punishment, cannot please for ever, and the lisping syllables of partners in the mazy dance, or the more dogmatic talk of the young gentlemen who drop in to see papa of an evening, and who affect to know either the price of securities or something of those wonderful mysteries hinted at by the diplomatic *Owl*, and faintly copied by the *Court Journal*, hardly serve to make them love town in August, or admire the dusty scarlet geraniums of the park more than their worthier rivals the rich yellows of the ripening fields of corn. Even the college man, delighted with his first season and inflated with a belief that his review article is stirring the world, is ready to get away and leave the literary club, the scene of his triumphs, and cries out, with Virgil,—

> " 'Rura mihi et rigui placeant in vallibus amnes
> Flumina amem sylvasque inglorius '—

as an echo to the lines which the tired editor exclaims, quoting Pope, who wrote them just one hundred and fifty years ago:—

> " 'Dear, damned, distracting town, farewell!
> Thy fools no more I'll tease;
> This *month* in peace ye critics dwell,
> Ye *authors* sleep at ease!'

and in company with Government clerks, War-office employés, rising barristers, well-paid solicitors, fashionable physicians, and indeed all the ornamental fringe of the upper middle class of society, these fly away to all points of the compass, either far or near, at home or abroad.

"It follows, however, that when a man is getting on to fogeydom, and has a wife and daughters,—charming com-

panions, but items on a traveller's list of expensive commodities,—that he, like an old bird, does not fly far a-field, but settles nearer home. And no wonder."

Here it was that George Carew obtrusively winked at old Mr. Corner, and afterwards laughed with that gentleman, at the comic notion which seemed to pervade all young readers of the *Satinwove Review*, that they know as much of old fogey's feelings as old fogey did himself. But Mr. Stanton, with his eye-glasses dreamily fixed on the fire, still went on with his discourse, utterly impervious to the chaff of George, or the smiles of his companion.

"His daughter may be beautiful, but she still costs something considerable as a first-class passenger; and although his wife is as affectionate as she is comely and faithful, the trouble which her boxes and packages occasion is added to the expense, and increased tenfold if he goes abroad. So, like a sensible man, he stays at home, and sees more life and gains more health than if he ran to and fro upon the earth and went to Jerusalem, or the New Salt Lake City, as quickly as some rapid travellers on record have done. Cromer, Hunstanton, Whitby, Scarborough, Yarmouth, Margate, Ramsgate, Brighton, Hastings, and St. Leonards, are the places upon one of which, ten to one, the old bird will settle. The most distant are always the most dull, and are therefore reckoned the most fashionable. There are the Welsh watering-places, the south-west coast; there is Boulogne, or Dieppe, or even Herne Bay:—

> "'Why, where can you have been to not to know
> Somewhere where no one ever seems to go?
> Is it Herne Bay? No! 'tisn't *hern* nor *his'n*.'

"But these we will leave out of the record. Wherever it be, whatever sand be turned into Pactolean gold when trodden by our silver-footed nymphs, it matters not. The towns are much the same. A high street, leading up from a bay, at the side or middle of which is a pier; side streets narrow, inefficient, awkward, and contorted; houses small, dark, and fishy; improvements silly, bad, recent; inhabitants brown, lazy, and rapacious; poor people lounging, good-natured, clothed in blue flannel or serge, and with a general, open, sea-going character about them. Brave *á son insu*, whenever there is a life to be saved or cordage to be stolen is the male amphibious creature; jolly and merry, but with an idea that a washerwoman at the seaside ought to be paid somewhat more than an Anglican bishop or an American president—tearful, greedy poor soul, as poverty, losses, and the ever-pressing landlord has made her—nervous, anxious, over-charging, and, when flint meets flint, insolent is the lodging-house keeper; devil-may-care is the butcher; and exceedingly *nonchalant* is the hotel-keeper, as well as every shopkeeper in the town of Shrimpton-super-Mare, which I will take as a type of any of these towns. How can it be otherwise? A little quiet town, holding, let us say, six thousand inhabitants, who live by catching herrings, potting shrimps, stealing cordage, and other small games, has suddenly poured into it, at the beginning or end of the summer season—for fashion is very curious, and no one knows when the exodus will begin—an additional thirty thousand inhabitants. It is true that speculative builders have run up slight houses on purpose to hold some of these; it is true that the butcher and baker have made their arrangements, and that the farmers

around are aware that their markets will be diverted. But Shrimpton cannot be otherwise than excited—there are so many buyers; lodgings and legs of mutton advance in price each day; the whole town gives itself up to bagging the shoal of customers. Shrimpton is like an old woman, two of whose hives swarm at once; out she is with her key, her warming-pan, her pattens, and her shrill voice, trying to get all the bees in. In vain: Shrimpton runs over; part of the bees settle at Herringtown, a little farther off; some sleep in bathing machines, and others go back to London and proceed elsewhere. Herringtown and Shrimpton hate each other mortally. They have done so ever since the Conquest. Herringtown believes that it is the more aristocratic, Shrimpton knows that it is the more healthy, and each eagerly looks during the season to the London papers for remarks prejudicial to the other. When Shrimpton bags a sensation leader-writer, and urges him to perpetrate a libel called, 'Indecent Bathing at Herringtown,' it is in ecstacies of delight; when another who has had to pay more for his brown brandy, his glass of mahogany-coloured fluid hot, than 'a literary man, sir,' likes to pay at Shrimpton, assaults that health-resort with a similar charge, Herringtown grins all over. It is the same everywhere, Wavetown and Foamtown, Folkestone and Dover, Hastings and St. Leonards, hate each other like rival prima-donnas, and each revels in libels on her competitor. In the respective local papers sensation paragraphs are kept standing, and 'Measles at Margate,' and 'Rattlesnakes at Ramsgate,' are the sort of head-lines that best please the editors. Following out the tradition, the chuff-headed chawbacons of the country round have their

antagonistic stories; the Doverers are credited by the Folkestoners with being such fools that they 'threw a robin over the cliff to break its neck,' while the Folkestoners sent up to Government to know what colour they should *white*-wash the church.

"But here we are at the seaside, and at Shrimpton; with a landbreeze sweeping over hill and down, with great white chalk-cliffs, and a vast expanse of a changeful but peaceful sea, that spreads its broad breast to the stars, and tosses about like a playful giantess, not, indeed, curling its monstrous head, but letting down its back-hair in rippling wavelets, as if happy to wash the pretty feet and dimpled toes of the nymphs and children who gaze upon it. In all merry England there is no finer air than blows upon that Kentish coast. In all England there are few prettier sights on a bright morning—and the mornings are there ever clear, with flying clouds darkening the middle distance of the sea, and the sunshine resting on the golden waves beyond—to watch the bright English girls crowding down to the beach to bathe, eager to plunge in the fresh ocean, neat and pretty in demi-toilets, merry and alive with excitement, and making the keen fresh air vocal with sweet words, and ringing with their laughter."

Mr. Greville Stanton stopped for a moment to rest. He had evidently talked himself out of his stiffness, and clear away from the armour of society which he wore, into his natural self. So much so had he done this, that he carried his hearers entirely with him; and George Carew, slapping him on the shoulder, cried out that what he said was good.

"I can fancy," said brave George, leaning back in his chair,

and half closing his eyes, "I can picture the scene. It is before me now: who cannot recall it in his own experience? Let us often do so, when we are the denizens of smoky towns, but let us do it as cleanly, honest, manly-hearted gentlemen, who have sisters of our own; let us picture our English girls as did John Leech, in those sketches which were the delight of all art-lovers at home and abroad, and in which there is not a wrong thought, nor an impure suggestion. But don't let him follow the example of the writers of 'sensation leaders,' and go with a big opera glass, like a Paul Pry or a Jerry Sneak."

"If he do so," said Scumble, "he will see but little. I know what scenery is, and what effect Nature has upon even brutal instincts and low natures. The distance, the open air, the vastness of the ocean, the magnitude of the wide-spread scene in which mankind are but so many specks, relatively not so big as a fly in the dome of St. Paul's, all these must purify even the prurient; and the bathing-machines that receive our young ladies do, when drawn close in line, more or less effectually conceal them from view, although they are shrouded in a bathing-gown, and soon covered with the friendly waves of the ocean."

"By Jove!" interrupted Stanton, taking up the thread of discourse so determinedly snatched from him, "I think you artist fellows are right in the long-run. Still there is a for and against in everything, and there is something to be said in favour of the sensational leader-writer's view of the matter. There are those who, urged by the reports of those many correspondents of a popular journal of last year and the year preceding—I believe it is a regular thing with them, like the

big gooseberries—there are those, I say, who will believe in the possibility of becoming Actæons without enduring the punishment he met with, and hope to view Diana in her ocean bath, surrounded with nymphs, rosy and beautiful as any in the court of the Divine Huntress. These stand in the garb of men, in their form and clothes, some, indeed, with the insignia of the navy, with tarpauling hats and anchor buttons, and peer and pry through the narrow interstices left by the bathing-machines, and impudently confront the ladies who pass them, with a grin upon their simious faces."

"Nor is that the worst," said Carew; "you have pictured the men; now let me, an old fogey, deal with the women. There are other beings, of a female form, who go and sit—under the plea of waiting for their husbands—in a too close proximity to where the Actæons are themselves bathing. But let us pardon, or, at least, pass by these mole-eyed offenders. Vulgar as some are, we have yet, I believe, not arrived at the turn of the scale: we have not a superabundance of snobs, and delicacy yet lives in English bosoms."

"Bravo!" said old Corner; "I think we are degenerating, but I think with you, sir; I am happy to think with you."

"And so," concluded Stanton, "our rose-red English girls, blushing with exercise, and with the sweet flower of modesty on their cheeks, may bathe in peace, and afterwards breakfast with an appetite that would seriously offend Lord Byron, who, I am told, loved not to see women eat. Then there is the morning lounge upon the sands, the walk on the cliff, the luncheon, the little tea, the ride before dinner on the well-worn hack, which tit-ups and tit-ups as easily as a rocking horse. Where do you get such or like enjoyment abroad I should

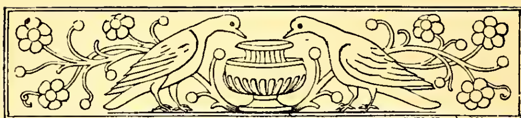
like to know? After dinner there is the moonlit stroll upon the jetty, the dulcet sounds of the last new waltz borne over the waves from the band which is playing on the pier; or if silence intervenes, and is to be enjoyed, where is its happy non-existence so fully felt as when it is only broken by the murmur of the waves? while to some happy nymphs at the seaside there is the sweeter joy in the presence of the happier lover."

"Dear, dear," murmured George, enjoying the picture thus conjured up by Stanton, "I did not believe the young fellow had it in him. They do not marry nor give in marriage, the men of our day. Yes," he continued aloud, "there too is the happier lover, and to both the silent joy of being each by each; the budding hopes made dearer even by fears, and the silent sweet hour which never dies from memory, but grows dearer still with age, the hour wherein they together watch the silver moon surmount the clouds, and through the pure ether the great stars globe themselves in heaven, above the bosom of the silent sea.

"Adieu, oh nymph at the seaside, sleep well and dream softly in your little cosy nest, although we have peeped through a window! Morning will soon come and put a happy ending to the dream, and when it does,

"'Più felice di te non vede il Sole.'

The morning sun will not shine on one more blessed than thee."



## THE CLUB WINDOW.

I CONSIDER," said Cimabue Scumble, "that we have triumphantly got to the seaside and back again, under the conduct of our new ally, and almost without his knowing it: I propose that we hereon drink his health."

This was carried, of course, and Mr. Greville Stanton, kicking his legs under a vain attempt to shake his tight trousers down, stood up to speak. Even then he was at odds with those very skinny continuations, and it was observable that under the table he was rubbing one leg against the other, like a fly cleaning its fore-legs in that wondrous and exhilarating fashion of its own.

"I am sure," said Stanton, "I am heartily glad that I have made my company pleasant; I've heard a good deal of literary and artistic men—generally not much to their credit, it must be confessed—but I find them very jolly fellows, I assure you." Then he sat down, and, taking a fine meerschaum from his pocket, undid the case, and proceeded to fill it with George's best birdseye.

Seeing he could do no better, Carew followed his example, first calling on Felix to take up the conversation, and to

lead the company in search of further adventure. "'Tis your turn, I am sure, Straightways," said Carew, "and I am anxious to learn more about that parson in Lancashire, of whom you once told me a good deal. That excellent scholar, who abandoned a good fellowship to marry on £90 a year! I pity those poor solitary fellows, who are in the church, and yet not of it. Does he ever come to town? A cleric of that complexion is always anxious about a wider sphere; as if it mattered a pin what a man's sphere is, so that he fills it properly."

"You are quite right there," said Dr. Julius Corner. "My dear father-in-law, who is deeply read in Nonconformist theology, used to quote something from Newton which he devoutly wished was written on every young man's heart: 'If two angels were sent down from heaven, one to sit upon a throne, and the other to sweep the streets, it would not matter to the angels which was the sovereign and which the scavenger; but *how* each performed his duty would matter.'"

"A strange doctrine for the present time," said Stanton; "I wonder whether that would do as a text for a sermon."

"Capitally," said Scumble, "to be admired and forgotten."

"Courtenay himself, that was the Parson of Stretton Longa, you will recollect," said Felix, with his usual modest blush, a colour at which Mr. Stanton stared somewhat, "would have preached a capital sermon on it. But he fervently desired, of course, to move larger audiences than those who entered that small whitewashed church. He has since, I find, entered fairly into controversial and general literature in London, and I am quite astonished at the

variety of his subjects and the vivacity of his style. He writes upon anything, from an aquarium to an armour-plated ship of war. I find him equally learned on vestments and prize fights, epigrams and hymns by holy George Herbert."

"A miserable thing," said Carew, "for an author to take to. The best way for a man to make a name is to fix himself to one subject, and to get celebrated for a *specialité*. These general writers are often excellent and admirable scholars, who manage to gather just what we want to know about a subject, and to present it in the most captivating way; but the public reads and presently forgets, whereas a fellow with a tenth part of their knowledge, who shall set himself to weave stories, shall make a name which will be known all over the world, and a fortune and a position which the poor general scribe can never hope to achieve."

"And yet one should paint in all styles, and educate himself in his art. I should like to have seen that book, if it ever existed, of Thackeray's, a thick folio, I am told, of his general articles, bound up, and lettered *Chaînes d'Esclavage!*"

"It was not at his sale, and I presume he destroyed it," said Carew. "But how about the parson, Felix?"

"I took him," answered Felix, "to a club that I happen to belong to. It was one of an uncle's—a rich uncle's—vanities to get me into a fashionable club, and when Courtenay returned my visit, I thought I could not do better than take him there. I need not tell you that I do not frequent it much myself. It is altogether too grand and too swell a place for me, and I feel when I enter its

huge portals, and look at the eminently respectable hall-porter who sits there, a perfect type of—of what shall I say?—the British constitution—of something never to be surpassed, and hardly to be equalled—I feel that I am playing a part. When a footman—I should say waiter—comes to help me on with my coat, I humbly thank him and retire.

"My club is in a celebrated street, with one of the prettiest and freshest roads out of town at the top, and the dullest and dreariest of palaces at the bottom. One cannot pass along it without pleasant memories. Here just as you look down the street, you may shut your eyes, and fancy that you see the great Doctor Swift walking in his silk gown to debate with ministers, and to talk of Pope and Gay; to say some strong, honest, very spiteful, or very tender thing. What a man that was—a man of power—sometimes misused, it may be; but why is he to be always misjudged? He had, perhaps, as we see him rustling along in his canonicals—for clergymen of the English Church then walked abroad in the manly, decent, and graceful Geneva gown—some petition for Gay, or a word to say for the poor young Oxford scholar, who wrote so well and who died unknown; or he carried in his pocket some of those touching, tender, quaint little letters to Stella—ah how deeply tender and sorrowful in their touches some of them are!—or he had something to urge about the subscription to Pope's Homer. Here, too, may Addison often have lounged, turning off through the park top to Holland House; and just at the top of the street—you can see it is St. David's day, and the Prince of Wales receives the Ancient Britons—that immortal beau

was arrested as he was about to step out of his chair. As he stepped—is stepping, I should write—will he not live for ever in Hogarth's prints? I wonder whether that fine wig of his, upon which the lamp-trimmer is dropping oil, was spoilt or not. I am always solicitous about the wig; and about the poor beau, a soft and not bad fellow, horribly scared at the bailiff who arrests him, which proves that he was young and unused to the folly—as senseless a habit as can possess any one—of running in debt. On the right-hand side, looking towards the Palace, stands a house, which, if the misery grown therein could break down walls and rend beams, would long ago have fallen to pieces. It is now a West-end dining-rooms; but therein old Crockford held his reign, and there nightly, in the days of the Regency, and long afterwards, the green board, the cards and the dice, made faster inroads into good old fortunes than any possible madness could. There it was that Captain Rook brought simple Mr. Pigeon, with the fell purpose of plucking him; and there poor Mr. Pigeon was plucked, robbed of his estate, of his mother's money, his sister's dowry—as much robbed as if he had been garotted. But of course in those gay old times—I protest a thousand fold that they were not the *good* old times—Captain Rook was deemed a man of honour. Did Mr. Pigeon doubt? If he did, coffee for four, and Manton's hair-trigger pistols for two, and poor Mr. Pigeon was a shot pigeon, and Captain Rook, who never missed his bird nor his man, had occasion to retire to Boulogne, and live abroad for some time. There was a window in old Chalk farm-house, which has long ago disappeared, out

of which I should like to have looked with my readers and have seen the strange tragedy of folly.

"Opposite Crockford's House, which was called by a name which the facetious Tom Brown has told us is not mentionable to ears polite, is a window celebrated for exposing for many years the H. B. sketches, which were the genteel followers of the wild Gilray's caricatures, and the mild successors of the pepper-and-vinegar cartoons of the elder and the younger Cruikshank. The younger, did I say? Of a truth, as a man, the son is now older than the father, and has for years left bitter sarcasm and turned his pencil to preach moral lessons; and his etchings point to the noble use of pricking the consciences of those who love the coarse and sordid vices of the world, or indulge in the folly of crime. All honour be to the good and brave old man, although he drinks nothing stronger than water, and lets his fervid brain run up, like a thermometer in the sun, to fever-heat when demolishing an anti-Teetotaller. In that window, through the very panes which now give light to photographs from Meissonier, one may fancy that Samuel Rogers is peering—an old man, with few pleasures of memory about him—an old man, feeble, forgetful, even amongst his riches, his wonderful prints, his editions *de luxe*, his rare pictures, and all the more when in the street, sadly resembling the one he painted—

> 'An old man wandering as in quest of something,
> Something he could not find, he knew not what!'

And so, if we live to be so old, my brothers, we shall be

telling our tales over again with no laughter to greet them, dim in our eyes, clouded in our minds, to whom the morning sun will have no brightness, nor the winds of heaven freshness and balm; better to leave the feast of life before the grace is said and the cloth withdrawn, if the Master wills it so.

"And by the side of Sam Rogers there is, fresh and vivacious, Sir Robert Peel, with his fawn-coloured waistcoat, trim hat and frockcoat; and in the street there dashes past a very smart park phaeton, and the one who drives it—an old man, if one counted years—is gay and jaunty, and has a little twig or flower in his mouth, and the cares of the Foreign Office on his mind. Such was Lord Palmerston, once so elegant, gay, and debonair, that men called him Cupid. As he rides along he salutes with respectful admiration, which all men seem to feel, an old warrior who, with a tight-fitting frockcoat, a military frock, with bent shoulders and head thrust forward, rides on his honoured way up the wide street and past the club window.

"The whole neighbourhood is full of associations: Fox and Pitt, Alvanley and Beau Brummell, noted wits and dissipated kings, pretty little Fanny Macartney, dear little Miss Burney, Sir Joshua Reynolds, going to pay court to some great lord, and burly Samuel Johnson puffing round the corner of King Street into St. James's Square, and wondering why people preferred those then fresh suburbs to his beloved Fleet Street.

"Such memories stir our two friends, who stand upon the steps of the Constitution Club, the two bow windows of which look out upon the street. Our restless friend the

clergyman, armed with a volume of Divinity, has come up to town with his guest, leaving Stretton Longa in charge of a neighbouring clergyman, and determined to force his way to fame.

"'Yes,' he says, as he enters the hall, in which a stout military-looking porter in the club uniform is seated behind a glass screen, from which he adspects the visitors; 'Swift must have often passed up and down the street, and the sharp face of poor Yorick, Lawrence Sterne, must have peered into the space which these windows cover.'

"'Poor man!' answered his friend; 'a sad, restless career was his; he died in Bond Street, hard by. This is our dining-room,' he continued, showing a long and very handsome room, rather darkened with continual gas-light and occupation; 'but strangers dine elsewhere. We do not make much provision for them.' Several gentlemen, seated at small tables, were breakfasting, though it was noon, and handsome footmen, better and more featly than the ordinary style of 'Jeamses,' moved noiselessly about. 'Ah,' said the clergyman, 'fine room; very nice indeed!' He spoke as if he were awed at the British stolidity and cold silence that reigned. Passing over the hall, from which a very wide and splendid staircase led to the upper part of the club, the two friends came into the morning-room, a gloomy and vast apartment, lighted by those two immense bay windows, into which the non-aristocratic portion of London people gazes with envy; although those who know anything about club life are quite content to be outsiders.

"The cleric had come up to be delighted, but it must be confessed that he was somewhat chilled; a few old *militaires*,

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in very stiff stocks, shiny boots, waxed moustaches, and new hats, or hats most carefully brushed, were talking in the window, looking out occasionally and waggling their heads or hands; they were the club gossips. 'Ah!' said one, in a voice which proclaimed a love for curries and hot dishes—a peculiarly rich and worn voice, which, once heard, one never forgets—'there's Colonel Fail, Sir Charles; lucky fellow—always drops into something without doing anything; now, in my days——' Here he was interrupted by Sir Colandar Yawn, who nodded to a friend, who was hurrying along in a vigorous way. 'If O'Neil is in such a hurry,' said the young officer, stretching himself, 'why the plague doesn't he take a ca—a—ab?' He stretched himself and his last word as he spoke, and Sir Charles Coldstream, looking with a gloomy empty eye upon the outside pavement, said—'Going up to Hertford Street, no doubt; thinks he's a happy fellow; going to marry, eh! Is very spooney on one of the Mitchener girls; thinks she's a sweet creature: he will find there's nothing in it.' 'What I complain of,' cried a veteran with a creaking voice, 'is that a man is not allowed to sell out of the army and keep his commission too; he would bag a lot of money.' Here all the company turned round with an admiring gaze upon the colonel, who begged to explain that——

"But why listen to the conversation of the old captains of the club? A more gloomy and ill-used set of warriors never existed; but they were equalled, not excelled, that they could not be, by a set of politicians in the next window. There were gentlemen of various ages, gentlemen certainly in look and in manner, who had been in the diplomatic service, or

who expected a little place under so and so, when somebody else came in. Unhappily, when he did come in, somebody else forgot to bestow the place, 'where it ought to have been bestowed, you know,' and our politicians, who knew all the moves on the board, and could have prevented Fenianism or have made Ireland contented and Lancashire fully employed, were left out in the cold to grumble.

"The politicians were decidedly shabbier than the military men, and wanted a certain neatness which the old warriors had. They were more restless, and wandered about now and then to the papers which were opened on stands, or lay on the table. They seemed to regard all writers with much contempt, and were afraid that they knew the motives and secret springs of every thing; for every why there was a wherefore with these lively fellows. 'S'pose the Chancellor has been at Milroy, you know, or he never would have written that article in the *Economist*, you know;' or, 'To my certain knowledge, Lady Bokanky sent an invitation to little Ledgers of the *Morning Post;* he married very well, but is an awful cad himself; and then out came that furious leader in favour of the Emancipation of the Serfs, and for changing the English standard of miles into that of the Russian versts.' In one thing both parties agreed. The country, sir, was being ruined; slowly the progress of democracy was ruining this great nation; the Constitution was being undermined; the army was going to the devil—thus plainly they spoke—the Civil Service was given over to cads; the Universities were hotbeds of sedition; and the days of England were numbered.

"Our friends caught up the gist of this pleasant talk a

they moved about the room, so full of easy-chairs and soft lounges, and so full of discontent too. Here was Mr. Grabber, an independent member, who belonged to no set, with the *Saturday Review* before him, the *Spectator* and *Examiner* under his arm, the *Quarterly* and *Edinburgh* tucked into his chair; and *Blackwood*, the *London News*, *Frazer*, and a miscellaneous assortment of papers tightly screwed down by his superincumbent fist. There, Lord Dawdle, half asleep over the *Guardian*, and in the corner, Mr. Flutter, who constantly disturbed all the rest of the members by rattling over the papers, and dwelling for no one moment on a paragraph.

"'Come up-stairs into the drawing-room,' said our friend to the clergyman. 'You see we are not very friendly. No one knows anybody else at our club, just except those two sets. You may be as lonely as in the deserts of Sahara; but this is nothing to the Universal Club at Whitehall. There clergymen do congregate, and no member speaks to the other on pain of expulsion.'

"'Oh!' said the visitor; 'I thought you were rather jolly.'

"'Some clubs are, but not the *élite;* we must pay for our superior advancement. At the Universal, for instance, billiards are unknown, and the smoking-room is in a kind of den, looking out on the Thames, like a back kitchen; but heir drawing-room, lined with tapestry, is superb. But I don't like the club; no one ever speaks there in a tone louder than a whisper.'

"'Ah!' returned his guest, 'and this room?'

"'Is the smoking-room; you can smell it. That is the cause of the double doors which, at either end of the passage,

keep the room from contaminating the other part of the house. You see how comfortable these spring seats are; here, too, are sofas that you can lie on and kick up your heels; whereas, in our drawing-room, you must be as stiff and as proper as if you were at Lady Jusanem's. Let us now go down-stairs to the library.'

"And so onwards into a fine room they went, the very doors of which, when shut, presented the backs of books. Quiet reigned perpetually there; but the room seemed little frequented, and the books dusty and unfingered, except one or two volumes of reference, and a Blue Book or so, at which our politicians now and then laboured. Afterwards our visitors passed into card-room number one, card-room number two, and so on, cheerful, quiet places, with the tables set and candles ready for the rubber; then they descended to one of the visitors' rooms, and had some luncheon, promising to come back and visit the kitchen in an hour or so. 'I must send a note to our cook,' said the member; 'for he is a gentleman who lives in the suburbs and drives into town every day; and, as he enjoys a much larger income than I do, he is too great a man to be visited without notice.'

"'Umph! Capital sherry this,' said the clergyman. Whereupon the member went into a long disquisition on club wines, and proved incontestably that the steward was the best judge of wine and the best buyer in the world. As every club-steward has, or should have, the same reputation, we will not disturb that of this one.

"'And have you no friends here?' asked the clergyman, looking at the strangers' bare little room, and contrasting it with the comfort and magnificence of the rest of the house.

"'Oh, none. You see fellows don't know other fellows in clubs, except some few. Some men everybody is proud to know; other men go on alone. Club life is very, very lonely.' He said this with a sigh.

"'Almost as lonely as my parsonage?'

"'More so; for you have a wife.'

"'And yet, the people who marched past on the Reform Demonstration looked up with envy on your palaces, and may be with hatred on the members who looked out at them.'

"'My dear sir,' said the guest, 'that was the effect of ignorance on their part. I know for a fact that those old warriors were envying the healthy workmen, so full of pluck and energy. Our clubs maintain some hundreds of people in service and in the kitchen; they have the best of it. We pay thirty guineas entrance, and a dozen pounds a year—some clubs more, some less—for the privilege of entering a big house once a week and reading the papers. That is all. 'Tis true you can play at billiards by paying the marker, or dine a little more cheaply than at an hotel, and be attended by your club footmen. Beyond that, if you are a busy man, who has a home and a wife, you get nothing. For an old broken-down single fellow, soldier, or else one—let us say from a distant colony—who has no friends, a club affords a daily shelter, and gives him something to grumble at. He sleeps in Bury Street or King Street, in an attic, perhaps, and crawls in and out to his club. He scolds the pages and waiters, eats his chop, grumbles with a particular friend, if he have one, and abuses the army, navy, or civil service.'

"'And this is club-life!' said Mr. Courtenay.

"'The ordinary side of it at least.'

"'Where are the jolly, merry, witty literary clubs gone to?' asked the parson.

"'Ah!' returned his friend, 'we must peep into another window to see them.'

"'There are two or three that I know of, to whom some friends of mine belong, which I believe are jolly places enough; whereat the smaller stars of the literary world sit, but do not set, for they sparkle as brilliantly as ever. There you find wit, companionship, fun, and friendship; although to be sure, when these warriors of the pen have donned their uniform of fools-cap, they charge each other with undoubted vigour, and cut, slash and slay the very people whom they have belauded and drank with the night before.'"

"And quite right too," said George Carew, gruffly; "the Muse admits no rivals to her charms. We must serve her without reference to others. Plato is my friend, but Truth is my sister. Although, by the way, I confess that I don't like to recognise the bold Roman hand of a friend in the trouncing that I get in the *Satinwove Review*."

## THE SECOND-CLASS WINDOW.

FTER this sketch Mr. Scumble amused the company with sundry remarks about a pawnbroker's window, at which he, as an artist, used to pick up varied and curious costumes; and then Carew brought more prominently before the company a recently arrived guest, whom he introduced as my Friend the Traveller, adjuring him at the same time to tell a story.

"My friend the traveller," was a delicate-looking man, of about forty-five years of age, and about five feet seven inches in height. He was compact and well made, save that his hands and feet were, to say the least of it, of full size. He wore some admirable studs of oriental onyx, had an antique ring on his finger, of great value. His boots were made of Russian leather; his coat was evidently cut in Paris: that is to say, it was neither so well cut nor so well finished as if made at Poole's, or at any of our first-rate English tailors. His eyes, of the softest brown, to match with his whiskers and beard, wore a peculiar sad and worn expression. Some said he had been crossed in love, and thus with one story accounted for the sad look and the life of determined bachelorhood that he led. The truth is, Mr. Staypelton was a

traveller *pur sang.* He was for ever roving; he never stayed long in one place, but always, it must in justice be said, found his way back to England, after rovings of different durations.

"My artistic friend," said he, with a polite bow, and a somewhat foreign accent, "has explained to me how your little *conversaziones* or *séances* are carried on; but truly I don't know how to aid you. Of course I know many stories. My trouble is, in fact, an *embarras de richesses;* but I can't tell them well. I am of a taciturn nature, and notably a good listener. I am a *flâneur.* I want other people to amuse me. Nevertheless, I must obey the rule of this society; and I shall do it, gentlemen, in the way which is most easy to myself. *Raison de plus,* I heard a capital story, and met with a strange adventure, just as I came home. A gentleman told it me in a second-class carriage; for abroad, only fools, princes, and Englishmen travel first-class. Let me, then, throw it into form, and give it with the air of a true *raconteur,* so far as I know how to imitate it; and I will call the story, since I there heard it, THE SECOND-CLASS WINDOW.

"The train, which had proceeded a few thousands of yards from Mayence, on our way to Strasbourg, all of a sudden stopped short. The passengers craned their necks out of the carriages to see what was the matter, but as a thick darkness lay all along the line, they did so to no purpose.

"'*Peste!*' said a fat Frenchman, 'how goes it with us now! are we to be suspected and stopped?'

"A German student, who had probably distinguished himself in a way which was not very creditable to his small country, looked round in alarm, and fancied that he saw one

of the armed police of Mayence ready to pounce upon him One or two ladies were very much alarmed, and were for getting out; but three Englishmen, with the cool politeness of their race, assured them that there was a great deal more danger on the line than in the carriages, and made them understand that foreign trains did not run so fast as English ones, and that, therefore, there was little danger.

"'But shall we not get hurt?' cried one of the ladies—a travelling nun, in a black gown, huge cross, and a white cap.

"Here I interposed, and begged to explain. 'I will not,' said I, 'guarantee that we shall not get hurt; but the fact is that on an English railway, when a passenger-train is run into by an express, it is smashed to bits, and all that the company has to do is to pick up the pieces of the unfortunate passengers and pay damages to the survivors. Now, in this case,' I continued, 'I do not think that we shall be broken to bits. We shall be violently bumped—to death, perhaps; certainly broken, but not disjointed. Our friends, *par exemple*,' I spoke to a French priest, who sat next to a nun and had his eyes cast down on his Missal, 'would easily recognise us!

"I shocked the nun.

"'*Ah, frisson!*' said she, between her teeth, 'what an unpleasant pleasantry this rude Englishman has.'

"'*Alle righte!*' cried the German-French guard, passing rapidly from carriage to carriage by the foot rail; he had been absent only a few moments, and now came to reassure his charge.

"'Stay!' cried the ladies; 'what is this terrible suspense?'

"'*Alle righte!*' said the guard, with a most polite grin; 'the rails are not quite safe a few miles lower down, and they have telegraphed us to stay whilst they are being repaired;' and away went the guard, in the good Continental fashion, to assure others that they were in no danger.

"Everybody breathed more freely. The priest read more continuously from his 'Offices;' the nun looked more happy; the German student was no longer restless, and even we phlegmatic Englishmen settled ourselves more comfortably in our seats. Presently there were fumes of tobacco perceptible in the railway carriage, and the tall, thin man opposite me, who spoke French, German, and English with equal precision and ease, lifted his hat, and obtained permission to smoke his cigar.

"Very soon it glowed in the darkness with a melancholy, phosphorescent look, lighting up a little circle round the melancholy mouth and grizzled moustache, as he drew in the smoke.

"'A bad time at Baden,' I remarked, tentatively.

"'Is it?' was the dry response. 'I never play myself, and I don't care to hear about gamblers.'

"'Perhaps you are right,' I answered; 'only very few who travel to Baden think so—our two friends, for instance;' and I threw back my thumb as I said this, pointing over my left shoulder to two young Parisian gentlemen, who were in the next compartment—for the carriage was a second-class one—enjoying a snug game at cards.

"The tall, grizzled stranger took his glowing cigar out of his mouth and prepared to speak.

"'I dare say,' he said, 'that we shall be here for half-an-hour

at least; and as I tell my story to at least two persons—if they choose to listen—in every calendar month, I may as well tell it to you.'

"'I shall be delighted,' I replied, eagerly; 'I thought your remarks very interesting while at the *table-d'hôte* at Mayence. I shall be delighted to improve the acquaintance. Moreover, you can speak here very safely; there are not many who understand our rough island tongue.'

"The priest looked up with a knowing smile, but said nothing, and, dropping his eyes on his book, he continued his reading, apparently keeping his eyes and ears both busy.

"'*Our* tongue!' said the melancholy stranger, with an inflection on the possessive pronoun: 'I am not an Englishman; I am a native of good old Kiew; a Russian born and bred; a Russian in love, in hope, and in heart.'

"He spoke this so slowly, that he did not remove the glowing cigar from his lips, but moved them gently up and down.

"'I've often heard Russians speak English,' said I, 'but never one so well as you. I should have thought your *Kiew* was our good old Surrey *Kew*, without your explanation; but don't let me interrupt you.'

"The Russian settled himself in the seat of the carriage, drew his soft gloves from his pale hands, on the right little finger of which sparkled a diamond of great value, which threw out strange, steely, bluish rays, and began to speak as follows:—

"'I was brought up at the University in my native town—I need not say to the military life; we always embrace that, *nous autres*, and we like it: it suits us, and Holy Russia as well. It is so long ago since I was at college, that I almost

forget the strict rules, and bad food, and the constant drill which we military students had. There were many others to be brought up for a priest's life—theological students—but we took little heed of those poor fellows, who had neither money nor spirit enough to enter the only profession in Russia, that of arms.'

"The reverend gentleman next to him gave a slight cough.

"'Amongst those fellows, however, with whom few of us cared to associate, was one who gained a complete mastery over me by his gentleness and his cleverness. His name was Alexis ——, his age, a year younger than mine; his form commanding; his face beautiful; his birth low. The son of a peasant serf, he could not enter the army as an officer: he would not do so in the ranks; so he determined, he said, to enter that large army—a few brigades, and of the worst sort of which are quartered in Russia—under the name of the Greek Church.

"'Alexis was too clever for a Pope, or Papa, as we call all our priests. He learnt everything; he used to join a few of us, whom he kept alive by his wit, in our rooms, go through the drill, laugh at our awkwardness, pore over our books of infantry, artillery, or fortification practice, and so loved them, in fact, that I believe some of the old books that were missed would have been found in his box if we had searched it. At any rate he made himself master of the knowledge that was in them.'

"'What could he do that for?' asked the priest, interested in the fate of his Greek brother, and betraying his knowledge of the English tongue.

"'Another listener!' said the Russian! 'all the better;

three would be better still. Reverend sir,' he continued, raising his hat with respect, 'listen, and you shall hear.

"'Amongst other matters that he was master of, this Alexis'—the narrator continued, softly puffing the smoke from his lips at short intervals, so that his cigar kept up a soft glow—'was that of cards. *Peste!* they seemed as if they knew him; it was a pleasure to see him shuffle, deal, and cut; he could do almost anything with the pack, except that which was dishonourable. No man brought cleaner hands to the table, and when he played for money, which he seldom did, he went away more often a loser than a winner. When he played for love, he used to astonish us. Cribbage, Picquet, Lansquenet, Ombre, or Whist, it was all one to him. He played a scientific game, too, and was most fond of Whist, because, he said, it taught you more than any other game.

"'It taught you *hope*,' he said; 'when you had a bad hand you had merely to hope and play well; the next deal would be better.

"'It taught you *charity*, because you felt for those who, with a weak hand, struggled against a strong one, and you saw that weakness or strength was dealt equally around.

"'It taught you *faith*, because, bad as the luck might be, it constantly veered and turned, and although you might lose one game, you could win another.'

"'He was a good man, that young priest,' said the reverend father, who was listening attentively, 'for he put a bad thing to a good use.'

"'Ah!' continued the Russian, 'he taught me Whist, and I became enamoured of the game. He taught me Chess,

too, and we often played together, and he would then talk to me of the art of war, and show me how the two bodies of red and white ivory were like armies. But we more frequently played our old game at whist, and got so perfect in it, that no other two could beat us. I loved the game as he did.

"'Well, time rolled on, and I left, and was drafted into the army; I was sent to the Caucasus, and fought Schamyl. Sometimes we were beaten by those wild mountaineers, sometimes we beat them. Beaten or beating, we still held on. A Russian bear sticks to his prey like an English bull-dog.'

"What could I do but bow with a grave smile to the compliment?

"'Well, after a time—after years, indeed—I gained my rank as others had gained theirs. I got my regiment, and I came out of my accursed expatriation to the Caucasus; I travelled to St. Petersburg and joined the Imperial guard there, and lived jollily enough. I was not rich, but I found that I could, fairly, now and then pick up some money at the card-table from officers richer than myself, and could always do this honestly—thanks to the lessons of Alexis. No one for a moment, even in thought, impugned Colonel Alexandre Petrovich, and yet few more regularly came off winners than he.'

"'You will understand that he speaks of himself,' said the scholarly priest, turning to me as if he were helping one of duller wit—a habit, perhaps, he had contracted from catechising and teaching others.

"'Well,' continued the colonel, 'I went upon some special mission southward, and I came to Kiew, and I thought that I

should like to hear about my old friend Alexis, although I was then of higher rank than he, and nobles don't mix with priests in Holy Russia.'

"The reverend father, who was reading his 'Offices,' shrugged his shoulders when he heard these words. The colonel continued :—

"'However, I could not find him. He had left on a mission; he had passed out of everybody's recollection. There was his name on the college books, years ago, and that was all. "Poor devil!" sighed I, "what a fate to be condemned to! Teaching fables to poor ignorant fellows;" for you must know,' said the traveller to the priest, 'that in the army we have little faith in what our Greek Church teaches.

"The priest crossed himself at these sceptical sentences, while I watched him with a smile.

"'Well,' continued the colonel, 'I left Kiew with a sigh for my poor Alexis; for, after all, the heart of the young feels for the companions of its youth : 'tis the only bit of Paradise left us; and I went back to St. Petersburg, just in time to be ordered forward into Poland. A revolution had broken out in Poland, and at the battle of Gochow, near Praga ('tis now thirty years ago), we Russians were beaten, and left seven hundred dead upon the field. Curiously, too, the priests were mixed up with the people, and a Greek priest, a pervert to the faith of Poland, was said to be the leader. Others, too, aided them with their prayers, and fought at the head of their columns, promising them liberty and a kingdom. We Russians, as you know, were determined not to hear of it.

"'Well, we fought one day after another, and were beaten

badly enough. They attacked us at Wawer, carried all our positions, after two days' fighting, took 2,000 of us prisoners, and made us retreat, leaving 12,000 dead on the field. The rebels! But Holy Russia never looses her hold.

"'I was slightly bruised, for my horse had been shot, and fell, and I was taken prisoner. We were marched a little way into the interior, and we saw the celebrated General Skrynecki, and heard the rejoicing of the insurgents. I had noticed that the Polish colonel who carried us off had something of a look about him that I remembered; but I had not the remotest idea of knowing him. Yet that evening, as I sat a prisoner in a miserable inn, listening to the tramp of the sentinels, and not very merry, I can tell you, the door opened, and I heard the voice of the colonel. He was in a priest's dress now. By his side hung a great silver crucifix, flat, and polished with use, but around his waist was also a sword-belt, and a cavalry sword clanked at his heels. When I carried my eyes to his face, I saw at once the mild glance and handsome face of Alexis!

"'Alexis!' cried I, with astonishment. 'My father!' said I, kneeling the next moment, as if for a blessing.

"'No,' cried he, 'no, Colonel Petrovitch, I prefer the military life, as you know; call me colonel whilst I am here; general of division, I hope, soon.'

"I still knelt, and ground my teeth with rage. 'So,' thought I, 'this is why he learnt our art at Kiew; this is why he was so fond of our books; this is the directing head which overthrows the armies of Holy Russia—he shall die!'

"'Alexandre!' cried Alexis, 'are we not friends? We are old companions. I love my country—you yours. Rise; you

are no longer a prisoner, you are my guest. To-morrow you shall mount a fresh horse and rejoin your countrymen. You fought well: would it were in a better cause, and we were side by side.'

"I rose at his orders. What could I do? He was a rebel, I was his prisoner to whom he had given liberty. I accepted the situation. 'I thank you,' said I, 'but I would rather go at once, if you give me my liberty.'

"'No,' said the soldier priest, laying his hand on my shoulder, 'no; and when you go, Alexandre, you must no longer fight against Poland; you must, at least, save me the mortification of believing that my friend's hand is a foe to my country.'

"'Nevertheless,' continued the Russian, 'I did not promise, but I promised to myself one thing, which was to rid Russia of her enemy. Here was this priest's brain, which plotted all. Here was he, the chief and leader. My love for him was changed to hatred. We supped gaily, and I remember he was full of hope for his country; for his compatriots had won a glorious victory. After supper we played at whist, and when he gave me a pass, the next morning, Alexis, not having paper, took a card—the ace of diamonds—and wrote my safeguard on it. We parted.

"I went straight to our general, who was consulting with a few officers, with his troops, beaten and dispirited, around him. 'General,' said I, 'are promises to the rebels sacred? I think not.'

"'*Parbleu!*' said the old fellow, who had in his day served both with and against the French, 'if you think not, colonel, think so; we are in a bad strait here, I can tell you.'

"'Exactly, and I can help you,' said I, joyfully.

"To make a long story short, whilst our general held the insurgents in check, and amused them, I was detached with a column of picked troops, and, skirting round our enemies, at a wide distance, I came upon a body in their rear—a body of raw, ill-disciplined recruits, who were being licked into shape by the energy and tact of Alexis and his drill-masters. They yielded after an obstinate fight: and after a few hours' search we tracked, and found their head. I shall never forget his face when he saw me.

"'You!' he cried, 'is it you, Alexandre, whom I have spared?'

"After his capture, the Poles gained no more victories. The rebellion was stamped out. We threw two hundred thousand armed men into the country, and 'order' reigned at Warsaw. As for Alexis, our general saw that he was more valuable dead than alive, and I was ordered to see him shot.

"I was rather than otherwise glad of my job, for my old liking for Alexis had grown into a bitter hatred. Had not Holy Russia fairly conquered Poland? Would she not always hold her down? Will she not do so now?

"The question was put straight to me, and I could only shake my head and answer, 'I do not know; I hope not.'

"The good priest looked up with a sigh for his co-religionists whom Holy Russia was driving into the winter's snows, was flogging into madness, or torturing into shame and disgrace. But the Russian, a strange weird guest, with his beard, his phosphorescent cigar, and his Cossack face, looked so determined and bold that the priest said nothing. We were both spell-bound by the mysterious story, and wished to hear it to

its end. As for the narrator, as he came towards the conclusion he seemed to gain in intensity, and jerked out his sentences in a short, incisive manner, which made them very telling.

"'The night before he died I went to Alexis,' continued the colonel, 'for he had sent for me, and wished to speak to me. Of course I went.'

"'Alexandre,' he said earnestly to me, 'we were boys together; does not some of the old love remain?'

"'It cannot be,' said I, firmly. 'We serve other masters. I am a soldier of Russia. "God and the Czar" is my cry! You fight against both, although a priest.'

"'No,' said he, sadly; 'not I, Alexandre: I fight for liberty and for Poland.'

"'Bah! Liberty is a delusion. Who is free? Is a soldier free, an artisan, a tradesman, a councillor, a priest? Am I free, or are you?' I said this hastily.

"Alexis took advantage of my slip. 'Free!' said he, with a smile, 'no: that is what I want to be. Will you free me, Alexandre? When you were bound, I undid your chains; can you not undo mine?'

"'No,' I said; 'I cannot, and I will not. I am true to my cause and my sovereign. Your life is forfeited; you must die.'

"'If I die,' said he, 'I warn you, Alexandre, that you shall repent all your life; there shall be no peace for you. You will have returned evil for good, and the Gospel tells you to give good for evil. You will have murdered Liberty in Poland; 'tis for her I would live, alone for her, for my country.'

"'I know it,' said I, as I closed the door, 'and for that I slay you.'

"The next morning the Greek priest Alexis was led out to die.

"He stood up there in his priest's garments, his arms bound behind him; the only favour granted him was that he was to die without being blindfolded. It was a dark spring morning when he was led out, and knowing how bold he was, and how his eye alone would intimidate my men, I sought for some mark on his dress that might direct their aim. I found, by chance, in my pocket, the safeguard given—the ace of diamonds—and I pinned it on his breast, over his heart.

"'Alexandre,' he said, mournfully, 'I die for my country.'

"'As I would for Holy Russia, whose sons you have slaughtered,' said I.

"'But I will come again! I will revisit this earth for you—farewell—but not for long.'

"'Bah,' said I. I had detailed the men myself: five good shots; but, to make sure, I myself drew my pistol and aimed at the card; then I gave the word—'One, two, fire!'

"I heard those five shots strike and rebound from the wall behind Alexis, but one shot served—it was mine; it struck him to his heart.

"Since that time," continued the Russian, "I have never played at whist with comfort. It always happens that three only of the company will play; that I am urged, as it were, to play; that we agree that I shall take the double hand, and then, there, opposite to me, in the empty chair, sits Alexis—the card upon his priestly robe, the same smile—so sad, so

sweet—upon his face, the blood welling through the centre of the card.

"We always win! Huge heaps of money fall to my share, whilst I tremble, and feel what fear a soldier can. Sometimes he holds up, with ghastly fingers, the card to me, and others see it not. I see him make signs about the play of my opponents. I see him interested, full of sad eagerness, playing for me and directing my play; and when I throw up my hand in passion and horror, to the astonishment of my friends, he glides away, waving his thin hands, and calling in my ears at the last the name of Poland!

"In my dreams I see him as well; in fact, he is seldom away from me. I played with him last night—three living men and *one dead one!* Is it not horrible? No one sees him but myself, and the students and young soldiers I meet are fond of sitting down with the mad player. I am forced to go through this, or I would not. Would every pack of cards were burned before I touched them! Day and night this Alexis haunts me. I saw him, coming along to the station. I was driving in the droschky, and I put my head out of my window to urge on the driver, for I like speed. 'Faster,' cried I, 'faster!' I again sat down, and there by my side in the carriage was the dead Alexis! dead to all, but alive to me."

The colonel paused for awhile, and wiped his clammy brow. His listeners shuddered.

"I never play now, if I can help it," added the Russian, after a pause, "yet I am sometimes forced to do so, and sometimes, as I said before, am made to tell over and over again this tale of 'Dummy at Whist.'"

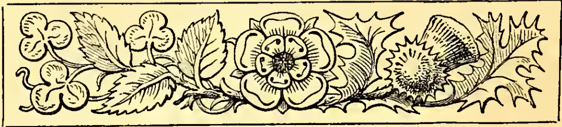
He was silent; no one spoke. I heard the priest muttering a "Paternoster." Just then the voice of the guard was again heard, "*Alle righte, Messieurs. Tiens donc!* the way is clear."

The engine gave a snort and a wheeze. The bell, which they use abroad instead of a whistle, was rung, and the train went forward to Strasbourg. When we arrived there, I found I had been asleep, and so was not surprised, but greatly disappointed that I had missed my Russian friend. The next day I went on to Paris, dining in the evening at the *Trois Frères.* Here I met friends, to one of whom I happened to say, "By the way I came from Mayence to Strasbourg with General Alexandre Petrovitch; he told me such a queer story."

"Did he?" said my friend, with a shrewd smile, tapping the empty champagne bottle meaningly. "It must have been a queer one, for General Alexandre Petrovitch was at the very time you mention, and when you state you were travelling with him, lying dead in a church in Warsaw, shot through the heart with a Polish bullet, by some Polish insurgent who knew how to take aim."

"Ay," said another; "but the most curious part of the matter is yet to be told. On the breast of the colonel's uniform, over his orders and his stars (for he had seen service), was pinned *an Ace of Diamonds!* Such is the fact, or the Russian account is confoundedly false."

It was not false, however. The patriot priest had found an avenger; Petrovitch was slain, but by whom must ever remain a mystery.



## THE HAUNTED WINDOW.

AFTER this story the host was moved with a vehement desire to speak. "Now," said he, hardly offering the assembled company time to congratulate the last speaker; "now you've begun upon ghosts, I will tell you a story that always makes my hair creep. It is a ghost, and no ghost. As for the fools who believe in ghosts, I shall leave them to Mrs. Crowe, who is half mad on that subject; but, as to those who believe in 'spirits,' I shall say nothing."

"What!" cried Scumble, "have we got the great author in a fix? Does he also stumble and fall over the many difficulties in the English tongue? Pray what is the difference between a 'ghost' and a 'spirit'?"

"Difference enough, and to spare," said George, "only people always will run their heads against stupid things. You can see a ghost, can't you?—at least, so people say you can. Nay, you are called upon to swear that you see resuscitated grave-clothes, and such like follies. Perfect madness to say any such thing; for, if that be true, the grave-clothes must project into infinite space, certain *eidola*

of themselves—that is, material objects would at once become spiritual, and for no purpose in the world, and that you know is folly."

"Very good; I quite agree with you now as to spirits."

"Well, as you can see ghosts, so spirits are not to be seen, but affect the mind, and not the eye. As to the existence of spirits, I, as a Churchman, have made my mind up. I have no doubt of it; but whether they be disembodied human spirits I very much doubt. However, I have a story of one who was invisible to man, but plainly visible to an animal. What think you of that? Listen and you shall hear the story; but, as I tell it not on my own credit, I must introduce you to the narrator in the regular way—Captain John Ramble.

Then, without further preface, George Carew commenced his story:—

"If any one knew Captain John Ramble, he knew a remarkable man. He was one as full of energy as an egg is full of meat. By-the-way, that is a very absurd proverb, because, as Lord Dundreary would observe—and the suggestion is, perhaps, not greatly above his Lordship's capacity—an egg can't be full of meat, and if it be full of fowl it is not worth eating. I wish some one would revise our proverbs; and if any one against next Christmas time should make a collection of those that are manifestly silly, and stick them up in the reading-room of the British Museum for the learned men of the nation to gaze upon, and hereafter to be called in for ever, as they do old coins that are past use, he will be conferring a benefit on a very busy and exceedingly ungrateful set of contemporaries.

"But about Captain John Ramble. He was a remarkable man, and had been in many curious places. He had travelled over America, China, India, Persia, Africa, and the South Seas. To say where the captain had been would be like a lesson in geography, and would not set off my tale one whit. I would much rather say where he had not been, although that would not be pleasant, because if he only saw the statement he would write to the papers to contradict it; he always has an ink-pot at his fingers' ends, and would in all probability quarrel with me most bitterly.

"Captain Ramble's stories are various, and this is one; but before you hear any of his stories you must know him. He is, then, about five feet eight inches and one half inch in his stockings. He is just tall enough for a gentleman, and not too tall to be without energy; for what says the proverb, again—

> "'Fair and foolish,
> Dark and proud;
> Long and lazy,
> Little and loud.'

"There, now, I'm quoting proverbs again! What have I to do with them, I wonder, that they run in my head so to-night? I don't believe in that proverb either. I know many people who are fair and not foolish, and many people who are dark and not proud, and I may say, while I am about it, that the captain was one of them.

"He was very dark, but as gentle and humble as a well-taught nigger, except when his blood was up; then he was as proud as an hidalgo of the bluest blood in Spain. He was

skilful in all exercises which men practise, except cricket. He could ride, shoot, hunt, fish, row, and play billiards. I don't think he excelled in croquet, for he said that was a woman's game. Not that Captain Ramble despised women; not a bit of it, he loved the very ground they walked on, but he had been much in the East, and was as despotic with them as the great Mogul.

"With his dark-brown face he had also dark thin hair, a pair of piercing eyes, a small half-sown moustache, a nose slightly turned up—not turnip, which is a very different kind of nose, and a very unpleasant one to behold, being a spreading nose, as if it had been put on hot, and had sunken in its place. Well, Ramble's nose was only a little elevated, good generally in form to the bottom of it, and then it bent upwards in a proud way, as if it rather than otherwise despised the world, as I have every reason to believe our good friend Jack Ramble did. Add to this a capacious head of a bullet shape, a fair forehead, high but not broad, a sabre-cut in one corner of it, and a pair of ears which came a little too far out for a handsome man, and you have the captain to the life.

"This man was 'all a man,' as the jockeys say of a horse. He was brave, generous, daring, quarrelsome, but forgiving; hot-tempered, impetuous, unreflecting, a great eater, muscular, broad-chested, one to bear fatigue and not to flinch; tender to women and children, but a despiser of cowards; learned, and knowing many creeds, and, alas! almost a believer in none. Such was and is—for he is abroad in the world, and, as he wrote lately from the very centre of the largest steppe in Tartary, sure to turn up, 'All alive, oh!'

"Now, once upon a time the captain had a dog, a ferocious

fellow, a bull terrier, with a great deal of the bull in him, and in my opinion much too little of the terrier. This dog he named Jemmy, or Jem; but to please the brute, I suppose, for the dog had its notion of dignity, he called him James on Sundays. In my opinion he ought to have been called Boxer, or Pincher, or Cæsar, because James was too mild a name for him; and moreover the Scriptural signification of James is beguiling, and the dog was not so; not one bit of a beguiler was he, but a staunch kind of a fellow, who had made up his mind thoroughly upon many points, two of which were—1st, that his master was the bravest, cleverest, and grandest person in the man-world; and 2nd that he, James, was the boldest, best, firmest on his legs, two of which were bandy, and trustworthiest person in the dog-world.

"If any one had doubted this, he would have no longer done so had he seen this bull terrier sitting between his master's feet as he smoked a long chibouque, on a low chair, and between the puffs indulged in conversation with his dog.

"'Jim,' he said, 'you are a beauty;' a compliment which the dog no doubt understood. 'I would not lose you for half a hundred pound note; you've the right deep chest, thin legs, small stern, and tapering tail, that you should have, my dog. And now, my friend, Christmas is coming on, and where shall we spend it?'

"The captain said 'we,' because he took his dog with him. The company of James was a *sine quâ non*, an unpleasant alternative to quarrelsome lap-dogs and unruly span els, but that was all. Jem was a dog of good habits; for there is about the same difference with dogs as there is with men.

There is the gentlemanly dog and the ungentlemanly dog; the first looks well, even when he is footsore with paddling up and down town, and is splashed with mud on a wet day; the latter, even on the finest afternoon, is shabby, shambling, awkward, and ungainly; or if he be shapely he has a villanous forehead, a half-closed eye, and a white feeble nose. Then there is the dog with a business, who is placid and quiet, who goes straight away down streets, makes his calls and comes back again; the dog with no business, who yawns in the sun, snaps at a fly or two, and blinks at you with a lazy intelligence. There is the masterless, spiritless dog, which haunts door-steps, sleeps in out-of-way corners, catches the mange in fault of anything better, and slinks out of your way in a dejected manner, as if he knew you had half a brick in an old pocket handkerchief, ready to tie round his neck and drown him off-hand. There is the dog flirt and the coquette, the dandy dog, which trots about with the air of a man with a flower in his button-hole; the slatternly little cur and the prim and the neatly cropped dog. And yet Jem was none of these; he was the well-bred English gentleman-dog, full of courage and staunch to his back-bone. So he of course went with the captain and was well received. He slept at his bed-room door in country houses; kept at his proper distance when the guests were together; and during the time the captain dined he might be found lounging about the stables, or now and then looking out for a bit in the kitchen. Other dogs he did not much associate with; he had seen the world with his master, or perhaps, being a purist in dog-Latin, he found their conversation low. During the mornings he would of course be with his master ranging about the

estate, and in the evenings he would wait in the hall till the captain came out to smoke his cigar in the shrubbery.

"'And where shall we go to this Christmas, Jem? Three invitations; none of which I care about! Hang'd if I should not like to go abroad.'

"As he said this, Binks the valet, groom, and factotum knocked at the door. 'Please, sir,' said Binks, 'here's a letter, a foreigner.'

"'Give it me,' said the captain; and he broke it open and read as follows:—

"'Château Briord,

"'14th December, 185–

"'Dear Ramble,

"'What are you going to do with yourself this Christmas? If you are in England, you disreputable old rambler, come out of it at once, and eat your Christmas dinner at our place. Governor is very jolly, and wants to see you. I dare say we shall have one or two nice people. You may have your own room, and do as you like. La Petite sends her love to Jemmy, and all sorts of messages, and says "Tell him to come, and not to forget my Turkish necklace." Drop a line, and we will meet you at Sempière.

"'Yours very truly,

"'FRANK MERTON.'

"The Mertons were great friends of the captain, at least they had been so at one time. Frank was one of his old college chums, and three years ago Ramble had spent two months very pleasantly at his father's mansion, the Château Briord, in Brittany. Old Mr. Merton had married, when he was two-and-twenty, one of the prettiest girls of one of the best

county families in Blankshire, whom he loved with that tenderness and devotion which only accrues to early marriages. Four years after marriage, and one month after the birth of her second child, Mrs. Merton drooped and died. This sudden and appalling bereavement was more than her husband could bear; he grieved as he had loved—passionately and sincerely. He acted on the impulse of the moment, and, not being able to bear the sight of anything that reminded him of his wife, or recalled the happy days they spent together, he sold his house, furniture, and horses, and, retaining only a few old servants, came up to London, intending to sail for America, Australia, or anywhere, to bury his grief.

"Quite accidentally, one of his friends mentioned the Château Briord was for sale in Brittany. Mr. Merton took the place for a year, and liked it so well at the expiration of that time, that finally he bought it, and at the time of which we write had been established there ten years. He had a large staff of English as well as French servants, and his horses were the envy of any Cockney sportsmen who chanced to venture so far away from Paris and the Jockey Club.

"'Good old Frank,' mused the captain, 'to think of his dissolute Rambler at this time of year;' and then, plaiting the letter into a long pipe-light, he flicked it into the ear of James, who was slumbering beneath his chair. James lazily opens one eye, and wags his tail the least bit in the world.

"'Shall us go, Jim?' said the captain.

"It will be observed that our friend, who usually spake as good Queen's English as you might chance to hear anywhere, frequently adopted a sort of *patois* in speaking to his dog, on

the same principle, I presume, that ladies do when talking to and fondling babies.

"A mellifluous growl, coupled with a partial yawn, ending with a sharp yelp, as if his mouth had been suddenly shut with a clasp, was all the brute answered. 'To go or not to go,' said the captain aloud, 'I'll have a pipe over it. Confound it, where are the matches? O, here's a bit of paper;' and, picking up the letter he had just flung at his dog, thrust it between the bars and began lighting his chibouque with it. Suddenly he noticed the words 'La Petite sends——' 'By jingo!' said he, 'Old Frank's letter is just in time; La Petite says, "Tell him to come." Dear me, does she indeed? and why should I be at La Petite's beck and call, I should very much like to know? Upon my word, I've a great mind to go, just to give her a good talking to. La Petite indeed!'

"Now, the reader should undoubtedly be made acquainted who this 'La Petite' was, on whom the captain appears to expend so much good-humoured indignation. This young lady was Miss Kate Merton, who, during Ramble's visit to the Château Briord, three years ago, was the merriest, sauciest, wittiest, most lady-like little romp in the world. She spoke French better than she did English, and the practical jokes she played upon the captain were innumerable. Whenever and wherever he saw that mop of golden hair bursting like tangled sunbeams from beneath the shade of her little round hat, and those wicked deep-blue eyes, he knew some mischief was brewing; that he would have his chibouque hidden or his tobacco stolen, or his French criticised. She even ventured to make friends with Jem, who would smile grimly in his canine way when she dared to pull his ears.

"The pipe was finished, and the captain rang the bell and his man entered.

"'Binks, pack up my things; I start for France to-morrow.'

"Binks's countenance fell, as he had been reckoning on eating his Christmas dinner with his uncle in Staffordshire, but he was not surprised; in fact, he would not have been the least surprised if his master had said he was just off to Dahomey, or the Great Salt Lake.

"'And Binks,' shouted the captain, as his knight of the rueful countenance retreated, 'have everything ready, and meet me at London Bridge to-morrow evening—eight-thirty train—I travel alone.'

"'Yes, sir,' said Binks, and his countenance immediately became radiant, and the way in which he rushed about and did everything in double-quick time was something exhilarating to behold.

* * * * *

"Without doubt the chibouque or La Petite had done something to help the captain to his decision; but be that as it may, a couple of days afterwards he found himself speeding along in the train towards Nantes. He had a first-class carriage all to himself; books and newspapers were lying about on the seat, rugs and overcoats scattered hither and thither. I said he had the carriage all to himself; but I apologise for having so said—a certain great and illustrious individual was there: I allude to the dog—the Jem of week-days, the James of Sundays. He was there in all his glory. He had the most comfortable corner of the carriage, and the softest and warmest rug to repose upon, and was looking

very happy and contented, except when the guard (who no doubt knew the value of Ramble's Napoleons) looked in occasionally, saying—

"'Comment se porte Monsieur, et *Monsieur la bas?*'

"Then a fiendish spasm would pass across Jem's face. And once when this same guard happened to say to a by-stander, 'Tiens c'est drôle, ce Milord qui voyage avec son boule dogue,' Jem leaped up with a sudden snarl, and would have jumped out after his enemy had not the glass prevented him.

"'Down, Jem, down sir,' said Ramble, 'soon he shall see La Petite, and La Petite shall pull his ears, she shall;' and with this he fell to musing upon this young lady. He thought, 'Well, I cannot go on with La Petite as I used to; in fact it must not be La Petite at all, it must be Miss Merton. She is no longer a child; no, she must be eighteen at the very least now. No, we must be proper and quiet; no more romping and chaffing, no pelting one another with apples in the orchard, or madcap scampers on horseback to Douarnenez——.' A growl and a series of unmistakable yelps from Jem at last announced the arrival of the train at Nantes. The diligence is waiting at the station. The captain and Jem and the *conducteur* are the only occupants of the *banquette.* The former lights up his pipe and wraps his rug around him, and composes himself for a half-snooze when they clatter out of Nantes at nine o'clock that evening.

"Off and away through the dark cold night, no sound but the monotonous jing, jing, jing, of the horse-bells, and occasional objurgations of their driver, and the creaking and

crunching of the wheels when they passed over a deeper heap of snow than usual. The *conducteur*, who has been oppressively loquacious at first, suddenly drops off to sleep, and all attempts to awaken him are in vain. Jem has been in a sound snooze for a long time, and the captain begins to think this really is very slow. What would he not give to be at home in his warm snug chambers, thinks he, instead of going this wild-goose chase to spend Christmas. O-o-oh! 'twas *awfully* cold! That was the expression the captain made use of.

"Once, when they stopped to change horses at Pennebon, and Ramble found it so bitter that he was obliged to jump down to warm his feet by walking about, he pulled out his watch to see what time it was, and just as he was going to look by the light of the diligence lantern, Jem, who had till this time been walking about most contentedly, gave a long howl and shook himself and looked up piteously at his master. 'Can't think what ails the dog,' said he; 'it must be the cold. He'll be all right when he gets to the warm chimney corner at the château. Won't you, old boy?' Between fancying he was asleep when he was awake, and dreaming he was awake when he was asleep, Ramble managed to get through a cold and most uncomfortable night, and was glad indeed when the diligence clattered along the ill-paved old-fashioned streets of Sempière, and at last pulled up at the Hôtel de l'Epée.

"Here the captain, to use his own language, began to 'feel considerably better,' for he was well known here. Madame, who was as smiling and well-dressed as ever, was charmed to see him, and Monsieur was immediately hunted up from

some back-room, and appeared in slippers, without his coat, and an unshorn chin. He had, possibly, been engaged in making the beds, or *cire*ing the floors; and the latter exhilarating occupation one may be certainly disposed to envy. 'Would Monsieur breakfast in the bureau—in point of fact in Madame's particular chamber?' asked Madame, with one of her most bewitching smiles. 'Certainly, yes, if it would not derange Madame too much.'

"'Et Monsieur Jacques il veut quelquechose à manger?' rejoined Madame, at the same time keeping at a safe distance from the dog. Thereupon Jem opened his jaws and gaped ferociously, upon which Madame, considering it as a commencement of hostilities, vanished from the room door, and was not seen till the breakfast was served.

"Ramble had scarcely eaten and warmed himself into a good humour when Madame exclaimed, 'Ah, voilà Monsieur Merton et la jeune Mees;' and oh me what a clattering and laughing and clacking there was all at once then.

"In came Frank, looking the picture of a young Englishman. 'What, wanderer! Bravo, old fellow! Long expected, come at last. Welcome, old man. How are you?' and there followed a hearty British grip of the hand, that made Ramble's fingers tingle for half an hour afterwards.

"In came La Petite—same smart little hat as of yore—her golden tresses gathered into a chignon instead of being allowed to run riot on her shoulders—certainly grown, and her figure developed into the fulness and roundness of advanced girlhood—the same blue eyes and the same laughter-loving dimples on her cheeks.

"'What, Ogre, how are you?'

"The captain was so taken aback by the pretty girl he saw before him, that he could not for the moment speak; at last he said, with forced formality, 'Miss Merton, I hope you are well.'

"'Ha! ha!! ha!!!—(what a joyous sound there was in that laugh). For goodness' sake, Ogre, don't be so formal. Please to recollect my will is law in these domains; and Captain Ramble, you are Ogre and I am La Petite;' in saying which she made a low courtesy, dwarfing herself to her former stature, and forming such a comical burlesque of what she used to be, that Ramble roared with laughter, and then every one else roared with laughter, and then Jem barked in chorus, and Frank Merton said the ponies would catch cold, so they must go.

"So off they started in a thoroughly English turn-out Frank Merton drove, and Ramble sat beside him; La Petite occupied the back seat with Jem, and amused herself by pulling his ears, and telling him all sorts of fabulous tales about his master as they went along.

"'The diligence was in early, wasn't it, Mr. Ogre?'

"'No, I think not, Mademoiselle La Petite; it now wants,' said Ramble, pulling out his watch—'by jingo! my watch is stopped. I'm certain I wound it up last night. Stopped at two o'clock exactly. How very odd?'

"Here Jemmy gave a growl.

"'Don't pull his ears, Kate, he looks savage,' said Merton, 'and there is something the matter with him, no doubt.' 'Bien mon cher Ogre,' answered La Petite, and she was silent till the journey ended.

"The Château de Briord was situated about five English

miles distant from Sempière, and the way thereto lay through a closely wooded undulating country. Indeed, so narrow were the lanes, and so thick the underwood, that in summer time, though the towers of the château were visible from Sempière, you arrived almost at the gates of Mr. Merton's residence before you knew you were approaching it.

"At the present time, however, our party from time to time caught many a glimpse of the old walls of the place through the net-work of branches which stood out sharp and distinct in the clear frosty air. The château was approached by an avenue, after passing along which you crossed over the moat and under a dilapidated portcullis into the courtyard. Here a flight of steps, immediately opposite, led up to the hall. To the right was an ivy-covered gateway leading to the stables and farm buildings. A couple of unmistakably smart English grooms appeared directly our friends drove in, and a true Breton *paysan* in true Breton costume, long hair, *sabots* and *bragon bras* (or trunk hose), assisted La Petite to dismount. Somebody rung a bell, and in two minutes appeared on the steps an English lady's maid, and a French *soubrette*. This curious combination of French and English in every part of the establishment amused Ramble not a little. After a hearty greeting from Mr. Merton, Ramble was shown to his room. The room was rather a small one, situated on the south side of the château, looking on a dilapidated sun-dial and moss-covered gold-fish tank. A large chimney-piece occupied almost one side of the room; this was of stone, and carved all over with griffins, boars, and dogs, one of which Ramble always declared was a picture of Jem, and invariably made the brute angry by pointing his

portrait out to him. Except the chimney-piece, the room was panelled all over with very old dark oak. The bed was unmistakably English, also the wash-stand, and notably the bath and towels. There were two uncomfortable high-backed chairs carved all over, and there were two most luxurious lounging-chairs, and a couple of charred-looking settles, just inside the chimney. Sombre-coloured curtains draped each side of the chimney-piece, and some of a similar tint might be observed on either side of the deep bay window, in the recess of which was ample room for two tables, one devoted to the toilet, and the other covered with books and writing materials. The walls were decorated by a charming water-colour portrait of Miss Merton, when she was in reality La Petite, an engraving of Millais' Huguenot, a spirited oil sketch of Kate's favourite pony, and a capital caricature called 'The Ogre and his Dog,' done by the young lady herself.

"As we have little really to do with caricature or with furniture, two of the principal things in modern stories and illustrations, we will leave these and return to Captain Ramble. That gentleman having borrowed an English servant, unpacked, dressed, and dined, and never more comfortably in his life than at Merton's hospitable table. Mr. Merton was full of warm hospitality, La Petite charming, and she sang old home songs so thrillingly that Jack Ramble listened till a tear dropped upon his thin silky moustache.

"'I could, sir,' said Jack, as he told the story, 'have cried with delight to find the English home planted here amidst foreign scenes and distant manners. They suited well, too, with the Breton ways.'

"Well, sir (we will let Captain Ramble finish his story), the

ladies went to bed, and I drew out my familiar pipe and Merton his cigars. He talked about nothing. Women *talk;* men *think.* There sat Merton, here sat Jack Ramble in sweet silent communion; between us snoozed Jem, wearied and full of dreams; he seemed fonder of me than usual, and now and then gave a yap or a whine in his sleep.

"At last I broke this quiet charming interchange of feeling—we were as silent as the twins born dumb, by saying 'Merton, how shall I get my watch seen to? it has stopped at two o'clock.'

"Jem, in his snoozing, gave a groan.

"'I'll give that dog physic to-morrow, and cut him off from his meat diet. How about the watch?'

"'I always carry two, old fellow,' said Merton, unhooking a silver hunter, by Barwise, St. Martin's Lane, 'and I'll lend you this.'

"'Thanks! and now ta! ta! old boy, I'm off, with your permission, to Bedfordshire.'

"'Good. You will find some books, a *Quarterly* or so, and a novel in your room if you don't sleep.'

"'Don't sleep,' said I, scornfully: 'why, I'm off like a top in three minutes after I'm in bed; who put that in your head?'

"'Oh, your friend La Petite; she insisted on the books, and on your occupying that chamber, the huzzy; she wants to try you.'

"'Oh, then it is haunted; by jingo, I'm in luck; this is what I've panted for all my life.'

"'Now's your time,' said Merton, with a smile. 'Mind I don't say it *is* haunted. Sure am I that you won't see a

ghost. Load your pistol, take the redoubtable James with you ; fill your pipe, and await the result. Good night.'

"'Good night, Merton,' said I; 'come along, Jem.' Jem was all alive in a minute, and away I went to bed. There was a nice fire blazing on the hearth, brandy, cigars, and a moderator lamp. The servant pointed these things out and withdrew. Jem, the dog, walked as was his wont round the room, his nails tapping on the parquette, and then, with an expressive look, whined in my face, as much as to say, 'Cap'en, I don't like it.'

"'Why,' said I, 'you luxurious brute, you want a sheep-skin mat, do you, in your corner?' Jem looked plaintively at me as I sat down, and walked to the door, scratching for me to let him out.

"'Jem,' said I, 'that won't do. Come and lie here; here is my railway rug; you're as clean as a Christian, you are, and may take it.' I put the rug on the floor, but the brute hesitated to take it till I imperatively ordered him. There was this good quality about him, that if I had ordered him to rush against a bayonet, or through a fire, he would have done it. He lay down, therefore, but ill at ease, and I sat for one moment in the chair. Curiously, all fatigue had fled: I put down my two watches, looked at Barwise; it was already a quarter-past one. 'Well,' said I, 'it's morning now, and ghosts do not walk then; I'll take half a pipe and the *Quarterly*.'

"The dog snuffed the friendly weed and was at peace, and I read quietly an interminable political article, comparing William Pitt to Epaminondas or some such stuff, the mind taking in the reading and forgetting it as easily, when

suddenly the bell of the turret stable clock struck two. I looked at Barwise, it was two minutes fast.

"'Well, now to 'by 'by;' said I to myself, when suddenly I saw Jem stir, spring forward, and bristle up his back from snout to tail. Once he looked round at me and gave a piteous growl, as much as to say, 'Come on, master, come on.'

"I looked where the dog, uttering low growls, and trembling, pointed, but saw nothing. The air was as clear as glass. There was the wainscot, there the door.

"'Jem,' said I, 'Jem, my boy, what is it?' I stooped and patted the dog; from the moment my hand touched him the tone of his growl was raised: he then sank down on his belly, creeping an inch or so forward, after the manner of dogs of his kind, as if about to spring; but, although his teeth were shown, he had no pluck in him; he trembled like a leaf and crept back to me.

"'What, Jem!' said I, looking at his staring eyes, which protruded from his brave bull forehead; 'what! Jem cowed at last; at a shadow; at nothing.' The dog whined piteously and 'yapped' but once, with his eyes still fixed at some object about the height of a man.

"Shall I confess it? That *nothing* shook me more than a thousand spectres. I rushed forward, striking my hand through space; the dog, still trembling, crept out an inch or so nearer, his eyes still fixed. 'Is it so, Jem?' said I; 'then here goes!' and I fired my pistol right above his head at the distance of a man's heart; the dog sprang up at the noise, and gained heart for one moment. Again I fired, again the same result: I heard my bullet enter the wainscot and hit

and fall behind it, flattened by the stone wall. My hair stood creeping, creeping over my head, my limbs trembled as I looked at Jem, the poor brute once more appealed to me, and again crept forward.

"Creeping inch by inch before me, his eyes staring, his limbs trembling, the noble brute passed on, and I, equally moved, slowly crept to the door. Before me was nothing visible, but on my face I felt a cold chill air, as if I stood before a block of ice. As we neared the door it slowly opened of itself and shut, and the dog, looking at me, gave a short howl and crept under a sofa, foaming at the mouth, trembling and shaking; I brought him water, and sprinkled him with it, but in vain; in a few moments, with one piteous look at me, he fell dead.

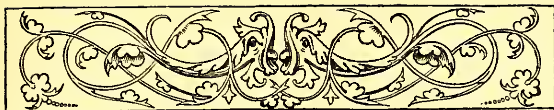
"The report of my pistol brought Merton and a servant to me, and my friend laughed till I showed him the dog. Long as this takes to tell, it was only just three minutes past two when the dog died; at two precisely the nothing, the terrible 'No Ghost' had appeared; no, I cannot say that—*had made itself felt.*

"For myself, I was never so frightened in my life, nor have I ever been since. I am free to confess that I had nothing to be frightened at. It was just that which did it. I left Sempière the next day, carrying a corpse with me. It was that of poor Jem. You see him stuffed in that case there; and if you could imagine those glass eyes protruding about half an inch, those fine legs trembling, and that prime plucky tail limp and cowed, you can see Jem as he looked when he and I saw—No Ghost!

"'I shall not attempt to explain Captain Ramble's story,'

said Carew, looking round at the company; 'it admits of no explanation. I can only vouch for my belief in the captain's utter veracity. He does not believe in much; he is half a Turk, and a good deal of a Brahmin, except in his addiction to strong liquors. He is indeed very little of a Christian, but he does believe in one or two things, and this is one of them.'"

George Carew ceased, and the company, who had listened to all he said with intense interest, behaved in a similar manner to the admiral in the sea ballad which tells of the young lady who slew her faithless lover. They and he (the admiral) werry much applauded what he'd done, and during the ensuing supper they all fell to discussing ghosts. I don't know that any startling theory or novel proposition was advanced about them. In Carew's opinion ghosts are overdone and not understood; so he said nothing. Only after supper—a frugal one—pipes being lighted for those who chose to indulge in the delusive and deadly nicotine, our young friends unanimously called on Mr. Cimabue Scumble for a story, which they dishonestly declared was due. The fact is, none of the rest were prepared, and the artist was second favourite. True to his determination of only relating that which he had heard, and only describing what he knew, the artist commenced the PHOTOGRAPHER'S WINDOW, which will be found on the ensuing page.



## THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S WINDOW.

"WAWK inside, sir,' said the door-man—for he has a professional name, and is recognised in the world of labour—'and 'ave your portrait taken—hartist quite ready and waitin'—frame and all, on'y one shillin'; or, hif you will go so low, sixpuns.' He then added confidentially 'that it was fus' clarse,' which, I need not say, was not the case with his English.

" He was a poor kind of a fellow; and, if a hat and boots are the chief criteria of a gentleman's appearance, I don't think this man was a gentleman. Moreover, he plied his trade on Sundays, and this, between the public and myself, I would put an end to, photography not being a necessity, nor certainly a work of charity—rather a work of the enemy to some, to judge from the countenances of my brother Britons hanging in the shop window.

" To return to the door-man. He had polished his boots—I am convinced that he did it himself, and he is to be commended for the action, but not the manner—with black lead. They had that ugly, vamped-up, leaden hue peculiar to boots which have been purchased about second—not to say third—hand. The other extremity of our friend's person was covered

with a jaunty hat, which still kept its shape, but which had a greasy lustre from being too often 'ironed up;' a furious carbuncle, in real glass, glowed from a black satin stock; Piccadilly whiskers trailed on to the coat collar and the waistcoat; and an impudent, unabashed countenance, in which, moreover, there were marks of hard life and considerable wear and tear, was presented to the passers-by, the door-man, who invited one and all to come in and secure a portrait for themselves, their husbands, wives, sweethearts, fathers, mothers, brothers, cousins, or children.

"It is not to be supposed that any one filling the situation of this Mr. William Jabbers, could hold it long without a considerable knowledge of life. A look sufficed for the discovery of a probable customer, and such a look he gave as his eye fell upon me, and he conveyed, by an expressive motion of one eyelid and his thumb, his belief that I was a very unlikely customer. To his utter amazement I replied by walking to his frame and examining it.

"There were some very fair photographs, and I asked my friend, who surveyed me with his head on one side, who was the 'artist,' a term applied by way of a brevet to the manipulator. Mr. Jabbers, who was a man of a few words, where many would be wasted, replied by giving me a card, on which was printed 'Jabbers Brothers, Photographic Artists. 'Brother 's inside,' he said; 'I take the houtside, and the most important.' I gave an inquiring look at this, and he continued. 'It's easy enough to knock 'em off, you see, sir, when you get 'em in; the artful dodge, sir, is to bring 'em to make up their minds.'

"I nodded approval, and walked in to a miserable little

glass house, built over a garden, and to my delighted surprise Mr. Jabbers followed. 'Now, then,' said he, 'here's a gentleman for a one-and-sixpenny: look alive.'

"The other brother, smelling of collodion and stale tobacco —there was a half-blackened pipe on a small stove—tried to look artistic and business-like, while Mr. William took a professional glance at me, and remarked that I had a good strong countenance and should come out well. He said, 'Trumps should turn out trumps,' a professional way of speaking; 'else,' he added, 'it's a healthy cold morning, and there's no white cloud.'

"'I'm not in a hurry,' said I; 'I can wait.' 'All right,' said he, 'we'll 'ave a plate ready in no time.' And he disappeared into his dark room, a small cupboard about large enough to pack a piano in. 'Not a good day for business?' I said, interrogatively. 'Thursdays never is,' said Mr. William, with authority; 'we only catches strays then; Mondays is the best for us.'

"'I suppose I'm a stray, then,' said I.

"'Exactly,' said the door-man; 'we has a gentleman now and then just pop in to look about him. Should you like to look at some poses, sir?'

"I nodded assent, and while Mr. Jabbers, senior, lighted a short pipe, with an apology for smoking based on the cold weather, I turned over the leaves of a carte-de-visite album.

"'There you have 'em, sir, in all their glory, and many's the tale some of them could tell, sir, if they could speak.' He took a whiff or two and proceeded. 'I might say as you'd see John Bull, and Mrs. Bull, and the little Bulls too,

for the matter of that, in all their native ugliness, in one of our books of specimens.' 'Ugh!' said the door-man, regarding the volume with disgust, as he shuffled over the stiff cardboard leaves, 'I'm sure I don't know what they have their ugly mugs done for.'

"'You remember,' said I, 'that all savages like to have their sweet faces reflected in a mirror, and it is evident that our savages may have the same desire.'

"Yet, as I looked at the book, I felt that Mr. Jabbers was right. Why should such common-places be preserved? I felt sickened at the enormous extent of the plain which stretched before me. A photograph book of male and female Britons of the lower middle class, inartistically posed, and inefficiently photographed, is not a pleasant object, and does not present anything peculiarly expressive. Does Mrs. Smith, who keeps one on her drawing-room table, think much of hers, I wonder? How she must despise her friends as she looks over them; from that girl with a leer, who is holding up a pocket-handkerchief with this motto on it—

'Yes, this is my album,<br>
But learn ere you look,<br>
That all are expected<br>
To add to my book.'

"Pah! I can't repeat the rubbish; the two last lines say something about 'leaving your portrait for others to quiz.'"

"Here Mr. Carew burst in with, 'You're quite right, Scumble. If there be anything essentially vulgar in the world, it is that constant belief that when you look over people's property or portraits you "quiz" them. How I should like to punch that fellow's head!'

"Whose head?' asked Felix.

"The horrid wretch who did that photographic rhyme. There is something essentially unfortunate in photographs. Not one photographer, at present, in a hundred, has had anything like an artistic education. Those who have artistic feeling are not good executants; those who execute well—manipulate, the blockheads call it, where there is no manipulation in it—have no notion how the subject should stand, sit, sprawl, or lie. As for the middle-class Britons that Scumble is talking of, they too evidently want much of that sweetness and light of which our modern gentle satirist is so fond of writing and talking.

"And then, continued Scumble, taking up the thread of his story, consider the female portion of the photographed millions—the female Briton who, painfully made-up, wears a portrait in the centre of her chest, of a policeman or a soldier. The form of such a portrait is oval, the size that of a penny jam-tart. Or she may be sitting angularly and fondly in too close juxtaposition to the *fiancé*. He, poor devil, has clothes upon his back, stiff and thick in their newness, hair arranged in a semicircular curl near his vulgar ear, a face puckered into a hard smile, in return for the gaze which the she-Briton with the fond expression of an ogress sheds on him.

"I looked upon such a couple with some interest, marvelling how people with the fair average of brain, say some forty-seven and a half ounces, could thus expose themselves, when Mr. Jabbers spoke.

"'If you turn over the leaf, you will see a couple in separate portraits, and a strange one they make. That portrait got

the man transported for life; he never thought of that when my brother posed him, I'll be bound.'

"'I should think not,' I said, 'or he would never have entered your door.'

"'No; it isn't likely,' answered the door-man, with a peculiar grin, as if he had a knowledge of the operation of the law.

"'And how was it that the portrait transported him?' I asked.

"'Well,' said the door-man, moving a little on one side, so that he could command a view of the street. 'A beastly bad mornin', sir; no one comin' in, you see. Well, it was somehow in this ways. You know we sort of fellows gets pretty well known to the police. They're always sure to be poking their noses into everything, and very right on 'em too; and the man as is on my beat, he comes up to me and talks to me quite confidential about business, and as he talks he gives an eye to the people who come in. I didn't like him looking, 'cos I knew that he was a very sharp man. Not that there was anything wrong, but I have a natural antipathy to a very sharp man; so I says to him, "Oh, it's all righteous, Bobby, I can tell you." "Yes," says he, with a grin, "I know that you're all righteous, William, but how am I to know as I mayn't pick up a little job out o' some of your customers? You have a queer lot sometimes."

"'Well, and if we have a queer lot,' says I, 'I don't care, so as they pay their money in these hard times.'

"'Right you are, William,' says he; 'I got a couple of bob for assisting a swell last night; may be you'll have a drink.'

"'I don't care,' says I, 'if, to use a Yankee phrase, I do put

myself outside something,' says I, 'if it's only for the curiosity of seeing the colour of a policeman's money.'

"'There you are, then,' says he, tossing down a bob; 'there you are; look sharp and get something, and put mine just inside the door, so as I can get it as I go by, and no one the wiser;' and away he walks cool like, as if there was nothing between us. Presently he comes back quietly, takes his beer and the change, and turns inside to wipe his mouth on the back of his Berlin glove.

"'We was very friendly afterwards, and soon that bobby got promoted.'

"'He was made sergeant?' said I.

"'No, he wasn't; not a bit of it. I missed him from his usual beat for a long time, and was rather anxious, for he was a very good sort, when one day I heard his peculiar whistle; a whistle he used to give when he stood beer, or he wanted me to stand it, for we took it by turns; and, turning round, I saw a jovial young carpenter, with corduroy trousers and a foot-rule a stickin' out of a little private pocket in the side of his leg, that is made o' purpose for these things. Hallo! Bobby,' says I. 'Hallo! William,' says he; 'you know me?'

"'What! are you gone into trade, then?' I asked, looking at him from top to toe, his fresh complexion, short hair, and the saw-dust in the cracks of his shoes.

"'No,' he says, with a laugh; ''tain't a bad get-up, is it? No, William Jabbers; you see I've got promoted, and I'm a plain-clothes man in my regiment.'

"'You see, sir,' explained Mr. Jabbers, 'there's only a very few detectives; the number ain't much above six or so at Scotland Yard, where the chief inspector is, and the rest of

the detectives, as they call 'em, are merely men attached to each division, who put on disguises and go about seeing what they can devour. (Mr. Jabbers was here scriptural as well as symbolical.) My particular bobby was one of these, and, being a sharp fellow, a very good thing he made of it. But, put whatever clothes on that he could, I managed always to know him. He walked like a man as had been drilled, and, whether he came as a clergyman, a city clerk, a carter, or a dissenting minister, I knew my original bobby well enough. Many's the day he spent with me; he seemed to like photography, and we was always ready to take him in his different dresses.

"'Well, one day he came to me as a city missionary, and very well he looked. He had a bundle of tracts in one hand, thick boots, a rusty black coat of a clerical cut, an old hat with a band round it, and white worsted gloves of the sort they call ringwood. He looked a serviceable sort of good work-a-day religious man, and no one would have thought what a wolf in sheep's clothing he was. He gave his whistle, just two bars, as he came into the shop, and says he, "William Jabbers, do you want to make a fi'pun note?"

"'Very badly, Bobby,' says I.

"'You mustn't call me that now,' says he, looking round timid like. 'I'm the Reverend Mr. Dawson,' says he; 'how do I do?'

"'About the best make-up that I've seen you in. Do you want it took off?'

"'No,' says the reverend gentleman, with a grin, 'not now. But about this fiver. Have you seen anything like this?' And he took out of his pocket a description of some unhappy

devil of a clerk who had absconded. "About five feet seven, twenty-one years of age, fair, with a small moustache, and a downcast look, slightly pock-marked on the left side of his face, dresses genteelly."

"'Well,' says I, 'they are not very complimentary to him, say what they like about his dress.'

"'No,' says the reverend gentleman; 'but they're about right, I'm thinking. They ain't got no reason to flatter; yet he seems pretty dear to them, I think; they offer two hundred and fifty poun' down, and they make it more if we catch him before he disposes of all as he has absconded with. Now I've an idea, and if it turns out right you must help me with your photos; and if so be you do, why, you shall have five pound of the plunder. You took that man about six months ago. I have a presentiment that I saw him enter this shop.'

"'Well, nothing could drive that idea out of the bobby's head. He was one of those fellows who took hold of a notion and stuck to it; and, by Jove, if he didn't spend all the morning at our glass negatives. When you see a man the wrong way, and black where he should be light, he looks very different, so I had to earn my five pound; at last I found something that might answer to our friend's idea, and when we gave him a print of it he said, "That's the man!" That's him as you looked at, sir,' said William Jabbers, lighting his pipe. 'I did half the bobby's work for him, you see; but I did it with a heavy 'art, for I dislike to blow on any man. I think,' says I, 'Bobby, you ought to make it ten,' alluding to the pounds, 'Bobby.'

"'Well,' says he, taking prints of the two negatives, 'it's

odds if I don't get 'em now. But la! it is not every rogue's photo as finds him out. Good morning, William. If all goes well I'll make it ten.'

"'Given a photograph, and a sharp policeman, how to find a criminal out of about twelve millions as look very much like him. Maybe not so many, counting the young and old; but there's enough to puzzle one, I know. That was what the Reverend Mr. Dawson thought when he went off, making me promise not to take the negative down to Scotland Yard. It was about a month before he turned up, and then he came back looking very much like a sailor, and put into my hand a five-pound note, saying, "I've done the trick, William Jabbers; but if it hadn't been for the woman's carte, I shouldn't 'adone it at all, and therefore right you are. I'll give you another of Mr. William Marshall's promissory bills in case he turns out trumps."

"'So you've got him,' says I, pocketing the fiver. 'Poor devil! And how did you do it? For by the way, sir'—here Mr. Jabbers addressed me—'*I* don't like the way those fellows have, nor do *I* like the fact that a man should prey upon his fellow man.'

"'That's all very natural,' said I; 'but why will the rogues do so first?'

"'Poor fellows, you don't know what you might do when you're put to it,' answered my companion. In short, my companion had a very common and somewhat dangerous feeling, which is shared in by hundreds of the lower classes, which arrays them against law and authority. I felt that it was useless to argue, and so let him proceed with his story.

"'The Rev. Mr. Dawson having reported himself to his

chief inspector, and made it clear to him, and I dare say he greased *his* palm,' said the door-man, 'that he was on a particular lay, that is, after a certain absconding clerk, charged with embezzlement and forgery, by name William Marshall, trotted off down east, and made all sorts of inquiries. How he settled it in his mind I don't know, but he preciously quickly found out that William was *not* there, and that he was in Liverpool. He was not long in getting there, and there he found that his character wasn't no go. They are a rough lot down there, sir, a precious deal rougher than any you can find here; and although the reverend gentleman didn't offer to preach, and on'y give away a few tracts, them long-shore fellows nigh put him into the river.

"'So he reports himself to the police down there, and soon rigs himself up as a sailor. He'd seen a little of seafaring life, and he made-up very well. Here's a photo of him, sir.

"'Well, he hadn't been there long afore he found that there was another of his pals on the same lay—one that come direct from Scotland Yard—and that every ship was watched; for somehow they had come to the conclusion that Marshall wanted to start to New York. Notes had been changed, everything had been turned into gold, and it was a neck-and-neck race between the policemen who should have him, and between him and the law whether he should get away or not.

"'The water-side being well watched, my friend saw that it would not serve him to waste his time upon it, so he determined to try the streets and alleys of Liverpool. That town,

they tell me, is a queer town; it is at one end of an ocean line, and New York is at the other. That alone says wonders. Liverpool is altogether about as bad a place as any one need pick out. The Teetotaler makes it his hunting-ground for terrible examples. At one time a fellow went about stating that within a certain period 146 drunken mothers had overlaid and killed their children in Liverpool alone! Then there are places there where you can do any mortal thing, where drunken Yankees draw their knives and Spanish sailors cut and slash, niggers drink till they are mad, and wild creatures from the slums of London are the leading stars at the music-halls and sing-songs. It was into such places that my friendly bobby goes, and it was lucky that he did not put on his white choker and his City Missionary dress, I can tell you. He would have been smashed to smithereens if he had.'

"'You give Liverpool a very pretty character, my friend,' I said to the door-man. 'No doubt it deserves some of it, but not all.'

"'Well, that's what my friend said of it, and he knows pretty well, I can tell you. He didn't have to wait long before he was on the scent, but he had to wait long enough to fancy that he had quite lost it.

"'This was how it was. One day he was lounging, about five o'clock in the afternoon, when he saw a woman buying some milk. You see these people must have their eyes about 'em, for every little thing startles them.'

"'Startles whom?' I asked.

"'Why, them of course as doesn't act righteous,' said the door-man.

"'This poor woman, buying some milk, said that it would

perhaps be the last they should have for some time, for her husband was going to sea; and then she sighed. My friend looked round at her, and that startled her. "Oh!" says he, "there's something wrong there. Going to sea!" says he to himself. "Perhaps it's my man."

"'Thinking that, he let the poor woman scuttle away, and, at a distance, watched the door she entered. Then he went back to the milk-shop and bought an egg—a new-laid one; he was very particular about it, because he had just come in by the Saratoga, he said; and says he, with a wink and half a hiccup, "That's a nice genteel woman you had here a moment ago buying milk; who may she be? She would not be willing to splice a sailor?" he asks.

"'What!' says the woman, not at all surprised, for sailors don't take long fixing their choice in seaports, 'with a wife in New York and one in South America, I s'pose, Jack?'

"'Well,' says he, '*they're* far enough apart, and won't hurt each other, will they? But—no, I'm a lone sea-farin' man, without any one to care for me, or to care for.'

"'Then she has, poor thing!' says the milkwoman; 'she has a poor sick husband from London, as has been ill a'most all the time she has been here, and is waitin', I suppose, to get over to America to his relations. Why, I declare that you've frightened her away without paying.'

"'The plain-clothes man felt pretty certain that that was the man he had been wanting so long. He felt his heart up in his mouth—felt as an old huntsman does when, after a long check, he has found again. 'By jingo!' says he, 'that's the man.'

"'Have you seen her husband?' he asked.

"'Never,' said the woman. 'He has been ill all the time—leastways, I have been told so. She seldom goes out except of an evening. I sometimes see her a-looking over the London papers.'

"'Ah,' says he, taking his egg, 'now I mean to have this beat up in rum, and jolly good stuff it makes. *That's* not the woman for me, mum. I am a plain sea-farin' man, and don't want any one else's property. Good morning, mum.' Away he went, and had his rum made ready for him, and while he was drinkin' it he discussed, as he called it, his way of proceedin'. 'That woman at the milk shop is the only person she comes to talk to,' says he to himself, 'and I am about sure that she is the woman as was photo'd with Mr. William Marshall; but I didn't take a full view of her face. She'll come out again. What a pity it was that the milk-woman didn't know what ship she was to sail by; what a pity it was I didn't see her face.'

"'He had stepped over to a small "public" not far from where she lived, and had taken out a small magnifying glass, with which he was studying the carte-de-visite, with one eye on the picture and one eye on the door, when he saw the woman come out again, dressed a little smarter, and with her bonnet on. She had a warm shepherd's plaid shawl, that covered up her neck, and she seemed to be a little gayer, for she was singing away in a low tone. She came out of the door hurriedly, and then went back again. My friend, while she was away, hopped out of the "public" into the milk shop. He pretended to be a little light—a little overcome with the liquor—and he began to chaff the woman and asked for another egg. Presently in comes lady from London in her

plaid shawl; when she sees my friend she starts back. The milk-woman laughed. "La!" she says, "don't be afraid, Mrs. Williams, don't be afraid; this is only a poor sailor in want of a wife, as they most of 'em are in Liverpool. He's been askin' after you as a likely party, but I tell him that you don't want a man as has wives in so many parts of the world."

"'The pretended sailor half reeled back on his heels, and looked at the innocent milk-woman with a jovial laugh.

"'I last hailed from New York, and from that place I hailed from Australia, where there are an odd lot o' colony girls, and some of a rum breed, between Chineses and Japaneses. What I mean to marry is a good sound English woman. I like none of your half breeds, I don't.'

"'Jack's right,' says the milk-woman, and with half a laugh on her face. The party whom she called Mrs. Williams, by the way, looked round. My friend was satisfied then that he had been all along on the right tack; there was the woman, and not only that, as she began to talk and ask rather earnestly about New York, and whether there was a decent living to be picked up as a merchant, or say as a clerk, she opened the heavy shawl she had round her neck and there was a common enough brooch, and in it the very photograph I had taken. My friend had a precious hard matter to keep his countenance, but he grew so very friendly with the two women, that Mrs. Williams actually asked whether he would earn half-a-crown by lifting down a heavy box; for, as she said, her husband was sick, and they were going to sail to-morrow. Meantime, my friend had persuaded her to have a little rum and milk, which he had fetched, so

they were on the best of terms with each other, you may be sure.

"'Well, to make a long story short—for I see my brother has got his plate ready—my friend, who could hardly help fixing his eyes on the brooch, but who was sharp enough to say nothing about it, came the next evening at the time appointed, and lifted the box on to the cab, and got inside with Mr. and Mrs. Williams, just to see 'em off.

"'I'm sure it's very kind of you,' says Mrs. Williams, 'and thanks for all the information you've given me. We can get on very well now, for at the docks the sailors will help us.'

"'I'll just go as far with you myself,' says my friend, 'just to see a shipmet. No, thank ye, I won't take the half-crown. I like to give a hand when I can, and never cares to charge for it.'

"'The fact was, my friend was above being tipped by his prisoner. He had squared matters with the cabman, and had told him to drive round, not to the docks, but to the railway station, and he kept a pretty sharp eye on the sick Mr. Williams, who was wrapped up in bandages and covered up to his nose.

"'A simple fellow,' thought the policeman. 'That's the very way to attract attention. If I hadn't had my eye on him, that detective at the dockside would ha' nabbed him for certain.' However, both the Williamses were anxious to get rid of my friend, but he wasn't ready to go. He would stick in the cab, and cabby was ready enough to whip up on the box and drive off. Then it was that, under the pretence of wrapping up the sick man, my friend felt that he had got no pistols, and suddenly popped out his warrant; and just before

they reached the railway station, he cried out, 'William Marshall, I arrest you on the charge of forgery!

"'Of course, when the cab stopped, there was plenty to help Bobby; but the prisoner was so surprised that he was done. "The game's up," says he; "I'll go quietly; don't make a fuss; don't let anybody know. Let us go first class—there's money of my own, and I haven't spent any of the firm's yet. You will find it all there."

"'The woman cried, and was wild enough; but the man, after the first surprise was over, took his fate well, and Bobby, to do him justice, put him up to all the moves of the law. He was tried and convicted, but got a light sentence, because he had not made away with any of the estate. My friend was of considerable service to him, and got another rise on account of his cleverness. He was made a real detective, and not a plain-clothes man; that is, he was not attached to any division, but had a sort of roving commission to pick up rogues; I often see him here, but I don't like him. He looks upon every man as if he would one day be going and doing something to make himself his customer, and he has got quite a fond regard for rogues of all kinds.'

"'Plate's quite ready, sir,' said the brother.

"'I'll pose you,' ejaculated William Jabbers; and as he did so he continued, 'Lord bless you, that is not half what I could tell you that we see in our profession; from being called in to photograph post-mortems, to making pictures of live cats or dead babbies, there's a good deal of variety to be seen in a photographer's window.'"

## THE NEWSVENDOR'S WINDOW.

OUR evening was drawing to a close, when Mr. Scumble insisted, having the deadly purpose of chaffing and irritating George Carew, on drawing a picture of the Newsvendor's Window. Carew, being fully prepared for any such attack, let him indulge in the pastime, and merely now and then turned his point, so that he might himself indirectly glance upon Art.

"There is one window," said the artist, "into which we ought to have peeped; truly there are many."

"How many indeed!" returned Carew. "Why, what has been said about the 'Milliner's Window,' what of the 'Palace Window,' what of that little window covered with a *grille*, through which the Priest, cowering low and wondering at the awful sameness of crime, listens to the gasped-out confessions of the really penitent, or the drawling repetition of her who only goes through the matter as a form?"

"By Jove!" interrupted Stanton, "I suppose that's true. Of course all crime is alike. One could take a peep now in the 'condemned cell,' or into the 'prison window;' but I fancy that, unless tricked and dressed out by the pen of a

practised writer, the sketches would have a miserable sameness, a dull identity."

"You can get crime in the Newspapers," said the professional author. "Butler's 'Hudibras' is a tiring poem. No one has read it through in a week or in a month, on account of its intense and general evenness of wit. So no one has ever read the 'Newgate Calendar' through with any pleasure; not even the most rabid devourer of those ghastly and vulgar penny Newspapers that have so large a circulation. And why is this? Because of the horrid sameness of crime. These murderers have no invention, or the reporters of 'the horrible catastrophe,' as they call it, have not the slightest variation. What a terrible trade; what a miserable degradation for any one who has aspired—and there is no man who lives by his pen who has not done so—to live by chronicling the brutalities of Bill Sykes, and serving up to a vilely voracious public the details of disfigurement of poor Nancy's face, or the depth to which poor Mary Hackabout's throat has been cut."

"There you have it," cried Scumble, triumphantly; "if you will keep with me in this window you will find many a work of literary men which ought to be burnt by the common hangman, and which is a shame to any Christian country. Let us imagine Newspapers written not only by those who are entirely ignorant or perverse, debating questions which only the patient and the learned should debate; basing their arguments upon falsities or fallacies, misrepresenting every shade of opinion, even their own, if they have any, and having made the mixture thick and slab with long adjectives, and misused participles, filling up the rest of the paper with

the dull records of crime, the brutal relations of murder, the foolish, idiotic stories of cunning idiots, who thought they were so much wiser than the world that they could grow rich by violent theft, and, with a hundred thousand eyes upon them, escape the consequences of the most open and transparent forgery."

George Carew grumbled an approval.

"Simplicity, poverty, and ignorance are, or may be, respectable," continued Scumble; "but these swaggering ruffians, these shameless bullies of the Press, who are strong and great only through the weakness and cowardice of others, show such dirty vulgarity that one's gorge rises at them. These are they who yell against the nobility of England, whom they miscall the aristocracy, and yet give the greatest prominence to the *Court Circular;* who point out, with a finger-nail tipped with dirt, an elopement in high life, and yet allow assignations to be openly advertised in their paper; who are virtuously indignant at a fashionable gaming-table in St. James's, and yet give the latest odds at a ratting match, or a glove mill in St. Giles's; who are churls at heart, vile in everything; whose vulgarity is only surpassed by their ignorance; whose ignorance is only exceeded by their vulgarity. These are your literary men!"

Mr. Carew groaned in spirit, but kept his peace, save to say, "Literary hacks, you mean."

"Well," said Felix, rushing to the rescue, "I don't think you are quite fair in that. You would not point out those fellows who are drummed out of the regiment, those drunken dogs that are found everywhere, for whom the cat exists, and from whom everybody in the army suffers, as soldiers, would

you? Nor would you class amongst the priests of any church those ne'er-do-weels who are of no use, and who cannot do good in any way, who get drunk upon the most solemn occasions, who cannot read the morning prayer, and whose sermons are spoilt when stolen, and when original, so dull that no one can listen to them."

"What other follies do you not see in the newsvendor's shop!" said Carew. "Magazines with knitting, netting, and crochet in, and yet bolstered up with stuff they call literature —indigestible either by gods or men; lumpy, heavy, without taste, savour, or knowledge. Verses written by people who don't know how to scan; descriptions of society by those who have never been to a decent tea party; rattling relations of steeplechases by those who were never across a saddle; and temperance sermons by those whose intemperance of life and temper are as remarkable as their folly."

"Add to this," added Dr. Corner, "Magazines edited (!)— save the mark—by people who have no more idea of what an editor's duties are than a pig; who pitchfork into their miserable receptacle certain articles which are sent them by their friends, without any question as to their goodness. And these magazines are issued by publishers who know as little of their trade as would a country clown if put to dispense drugs, and sell physic and poisons."

"There you are right," growled George. "You may say what you like against those gentry, although they, bad as they are, are not all bad. How many publishers are there in London, Scumble? Don't know. No more do I. Jobson Brothers, who commenced life as putty manufacturers, started all of a sudden into an immense popularity as

purveyors of novels to a discerning public. Well, let us say there are one hundred publishers. Really there are not more than ninety-five, or say ninety of them who understand their business. Hence the rubbish which floods the market."

"Bless me!" cried Mr. Corner, who had a notion that all publishers were as wise and enterprising as "Young John Murray, of Fleet Street," of whom Walter Scott wrote; "bless me! surely, Mr. Carew, you must make some mistake."

"*Non mi ricordo*," ejaculated George, with a sad smile; "possibly I may have said something unjust of these gentlemen, but I don't mean it. I live by selling and projecting books; so far as I know, good books; honest books; I will swear, made to the best of my ability, and even I hope, calculated to last and to do good. Cancel, therefore, what I have said against the publishers; they are like picture-dealers, I suppose; they are the reservoirs into which some of the gushing waters of genius are confined until the public has taste enough to buy them."

"Exactly so," said Mr. Corner; "I love to look upon these persons as something more than mere tradesmen — as patrons of letters, as the Mæcenases of our nation of shopkeepers. They no doubt find out our rising poets by keeping their eyes upon the corners of newspapers, or wherever else such flowers grow, and then they write to the obscure individual, and, finding him in a garret, purchase from him a volume of priceless verse, and publish it in so charming a form that it wins its way at once to fame, and the poet blesses for ever the judicious kindly men of the counter and the shop, who have lifted him into the seventh heaven of publicity."

Carew, who was in a mad humour, was not unwilling to humour the old gentleman, and, with a solemn bow, seemed to acquiesce in all that he said.

"Of course," said he, "I believe that it is a known fact that publishers have found out all the modern poets—let us say Tennyson, Browning, and Mr. Swinburne, and that not one of these ever published his first venture and lost money by it. There is a well-known firm, which, from the fact of an ancient member of it having written a few sonnets, is called "the poets' publishers." Well, this benevolent firm has, of course, done little else than suggest to rising authors editions of their poems, and even subjects for their dramas." The speaker stopped short.

"Bah! what balderdash this is. Note that the publisher, who always gets the best of the successful author at least, although he is sometimes pinched by the unsuccessful one, never suggests a work—save a cookery book. Pardon me, two publishers did in a way introduce two great authors to the British public. But, marry, how did they do it? The authors are really great authors, worthy of much praise, and they owe their elevation to their own genius, but the first step on the ladder to the publishers. But, marry, how was this done? The two authors are Samuel Richardson and Charles Dickens. To the first—a bookseller himself—his brethren suggested a series of epistles, a Complete Letter-writer, to teach servant maids and young milliners how to correspond; and hence arose *Pamela;* to the second, a very admirable publisher, no doubt, travelled from the Strand to Holborn one fine morning, to suggest that he should write a kind of comic libretto, to a set of cockney sketches by Seymour; and hence

arose *Pickwick*. All honour to the fine old English gentlemen who drink their wine out of our skulls at Stationers' Hall, but don't say that they originate. As for poets' publishers, they are the grossest of all humbugs. The poor poet publishes, and, even if successful, is mulcted heavily by the bookselling spider into whose web he has been unlucky enough to crawl. There, now I have spoken enough truth for one evening, and I shall shut up."

Shut up he did, thinking that he had taken the wind out of the excellent Scumble's sails. That worthy, however, was not to be disappointed.

"I think," cried he, starting afresh, and looking at Dr. Corner for aid, "that we have taken several furtive glances into various windows under the guidance of George here; but by jingo, or by the saint—St. Luke, is it not?—who is the patron of painters, he makes matters worse for himself. We have not yet done with the newsvendor's window. Look at those penny numbers in royal 8vo, illustrated! Count them, they are all stories of highwaymen, robbers, thieves, burglars, murderers, pirates; they are all issued by members of the *Society for the Propagation of Vice*, and are all winked at by a paternal government, although it has an especial bill which could pinch those who issued them. Every week they bear fruits; every week, at one or two police-offices, the 'intelligent officer' bears witness to finding a juvenile burglar with some half dozen of these stories in his possession; nay, every day, as you walk the streets, you may, if you are observant, watch the little fellows playing at thieves, and pretending to be Blueskin or Jack Sheppard—the grand thing in their small noddles being to shoot, to pilfer, to steal, and to overcome the

officers of the law. And now, if the author is the originator of such stuff, how much guilt must lie at his door!"

"Well, well," said Carew, "twice have I bolted you out, and yet you will get in at the window. Firstly, I disdain all connection with such writers, from their great high priests Harrison Ainsworth and Lord Lytton downwards; and secondly, I maintain that in the lower strata of the bookselling trade my rule is reversed. I have no doubt that the printer, or the peddling publisher who owns such effusions, does suggest—his wits having been sharpened by a previous success, and by having pocketed some of the money of the street-urchins whom he has sent to the gaol and thence to the gallows—to his wretched hacks the propriety of copying some greater author's story of thieves and bad women; and hence the 'Claude Duvals' and 'Spring-heeled Jacks' that we hear of. I concede, however,"—the author gravely bowed—"that there are men of letters—no, not of letters, but of inventive powers, and great authors though not scholars, who have, through a positive love for crime and low life, given us pictures which these people weakly imitate, and who in their prefaces have arrogantly claimed that they were writing with a moral purpose. The trenchant satire of Thackeray is hardly a sufficient punishment and answer to such men."

"Hip, hip, hip, hurrah!" cried Scumble; "we have brought him to his knees."

"Stay a moment," cried Carew; "what of the artists in the newsvendor's shop?"

Scumble winced.

"There you may see them in the long list of twenty or thirty of those royal 8vo. highwaymen authors you spoke of, Scumble.

There you will find the illuminated paper that depends upon nothing else but its paltry pictures to sell it; that has made literature utterly subservient to art, so far as one thing can be subservient to another with which it has no connection. There you may see this Illuminated Press, serving up week by week the old stale repetitions of the wreck of —— and the burning of such and such, with the old twaddling stuff about royal progresses and court ceremonies. No wonder we have grown sick of kings. How much of the obloquy and the hatred that they have reaped, is owing to the perpetual illustrations of Prince A.'s hat, Prince B.'s coat, Prince D.'s feathers, and the stupid servility and slavish sycophancy which has made all the honest people in the nation sick, even unto death, of these gilded shams! Has the queen much to thank those artists for who have so faithfully illustrated her progresses, and even the persons of her faithful servants and attendants, whose offices and doings her Majesty has so touchingly illustrated in her own royal book? Why, if the stupid hewers of wood and drawers of water had so illustrated the life of Aristides the Just, he would have been ostracised some years before that event really happened."

Scumble tried to turn the torrent. "You should remember, George," said he, "that fashion is fashion; that fashionable people are very empty-headed, and that when the illuminated paper—which I grant is stupidly written, and utterly inane—was first established, the people were in love with their young queen, whose progresses they watched with interest."

"I wish the triumphal arches had not been all so very like each other," ejaculated Stanton; "there was not much scope for originality in these things, but there was a terrible same-

ness, as in the battle of Waterloo; but every little village of Pedlington required its illustration, and the matter, begun in a cockney village style, has been no better. As for being a help to art, it has been a help downwards. Wordsworth was right when he denounced in a vigorous sonnet the follies of picture papers."

"I confess," said Scumble, "that literature is made subservient to art, and to very questionable art too."

"And whenever that is the case," said Stanton, "it seems to me that both suffer. Cæsar and Pompey berry much alike—'specially Pompey. Pompey being in this case Literature. Look at our Christmas books, from which the artists draw all the profits. Speak faithfully, Scumble. Can things be much worse? Are they not to be ejected, thrown from us? The newspapers, of course, in a fit of Christmas-good-humour, give each and all a modicum of praise. It is very good-natured of them, no doubt, but highly immoral. Regard for a moment, my dear friends, your Christmas books of last year. Who now cares a whit for the hideously tall and gaunt female creatures? they are not women that are in those dismal black and white woodcuts. Are there any creations of beauty in them? Are they not very much like ugly photographs, spoilt in the copying? Will our sons, who will have their own ideas on art, care anything for them? Our fathers, indeed, produced 'Books of Beauty,' admirably engraved by Heath, Armstrong, or Charles Warren, and we pretend to laugh at the fashionable art of Chalon. Well, I give Chalon, R.A., up; I, for one, will not defend him, but I am ready to die in the belief that the artists I speak of will never make half so respectable an appearance as he, after the

hot season of fashion has passed over, with all the conceit and self-assertion which now so admirably distinguish them. I must say, however, that the poor devils owe it to their injudicious admirers. The common quotation—whence proceeding, and where born I don't know, not from Mr. Canning's friend—of 'Save me from my friends,' would most certainly sound well in the mouths of the vast majority of the spoilt and petted artists of the day."

"Poor things, poor things," said Scumble, in a burlesque humour. "Of course they are much to be pitied; however, they make plenty of money."

"There you go," retorted Carew, pursuing his tirade; "plenty of money! Yes, I know that a mediæval artist, or a very inefficient barrister, or a lucky clergyman, who pleases a patron, will make five times the money of a first-rate author; especially if that author be not a man of business. But all art suffers from money, as every man about to run a race would suffer from rich feeding, or from too much eating, Gracious Heaven! the whole island seems to be given up to making money. We need a sore and sharp purgation from this, and we shall have it.

> 'Come the eleventh plague and reap us down;
> Come God's sword rather than our own.
> In all the chains we ever wore,
> We sigh'd, we grieved, we wept; we never blush'd before.'

And now people who watch England as a sacred nation, first in the van of all good nations, sigh and weep for us."

As George said this, he arose, and looking grandly, in his fierce style, which Felix had become accustomed to, walked

across the room. He *meant* what he said ; he was approaching old fogeydom, and was bold enough to affirm and give very heavy and hearty reasons for the faith that was in him that a gradual " decline and fall off," to appropriate a joke of Mr. Dickens, of the Great British Empire, had already begun.

As Felix knew that matters had gone far enough between author and artist, he himself interfered, and carried on the war against Scumble.

" It seems to me," he said, " that we have gone a long way out of our way. The artists of the newsvendor's window are not exactly those of the illustrated Christmas books at a guinea; they are peculiar and dramatic. They draw the noble thief in all kinds of heroic positions and actions, beating off the king's officers, rescuing the distressed, or fighting half-a-dozen or half-a-score of sturdy ruffians, whom you see at once that he will discomfort. There was formerly an artist, whose works I have discovered by looking over some of the odd rubbish published twenty years ago, who drew Obi, or Three-fingered Jack, and such like heroes always standing in a wide straddle, and with their hands extended, showing all their fingers, while their eyes were rolling in the finest possible fury. I have no doubt that his illustrations were very popular with the boys of the time."

" No doubt," said Stanton. " I don't go in for morality much myself, and I fancy none of our present schools of young men do; but I must say that I hate those pictures of brutal murders, savage assaults, railway accidents, and other things of the sort, wherein killing, battle, and murder, and sudden death of every kind are illustrated for the British

public. Our future masters seem to read those matters with delight, and when they get all the power will probably repeal the laws which punish murder with hanging. In their eyes, I suppose, the murderer is the interesting victim of evil passions and bad education, and the poor murdered man or woman a troublesome thing that got in his way at the wrong time, and so was murdered. I should like to see, I confess, those benevolent individuals who visit the murderer in prison, who pity and condole with him, and, so far as I can see, logically condone his crime. I know my sentiments are absurdly conservative and out of fashion, but I own that I look upon with equal abhorrence—not with hatred, for I only want to get rid of him—the stupid, foolish, senseless, blundering, and passionate blockhead who has worked himself up through a life of ungoverned passions to commit a murder, and the soft-hearted ninnyhammers who, forgetting all this, petition the Home Secretary to spare his life, and talk about the sacredness of human life."

"'I have no objection,' said Napoleon the Third, 'to abolish the punishment of death, provided Messieurs les Assassins will begin first.'" Thus quoted old Mr. Corner.

"Did he, indeed?" said George, with a slight sneer; "very ingenious of him to appropriate a clever *mot* of Victor Hugo. But whoever said it was quite right. The witticism is so true and so good, that it was made to be purloined. It is common property, like half the stories attributed to Talleyrand. However, I agree with Felix, that an immense deal of harm must be done by the lower press, at which our friend Scumble has glanced in the 'Newsvendor's Window.' I will agree with him, the dear old boy"—here George held out his

glass to Scumble, who touched it with his, and the two friends drank together—"I will agree with him that much of our literature wants sweetness and light, but it is not the lower only. These sensational stories have risen from the lower classes into the higher, and have taken root there; but what has not taken root is the sound, vigorous periodical done for the working man, with its manly moral essay, its capital writing, its harmless and innocent tales, its jokes and its home amusements. Our Government may think little of these people, who do more to keep the queen on her throne, and the land quiet, than thirty thousand foot and half as many dragoons, and yet they cost us nothing. These we see in the Newsvendor's Window in plenty. I must confess that my friends the working-classes seem to like murders, if I may judge by their newspapers, or by the *affiches* of the 'Daily Thunderers' and 'Morning Comets,' which every one of us sees. But then, if we go to a higher class, we see just the same thing. The latest thing in murder is discussed in the *Piccadilly Journal* and the *Arcade Gazette* with equal gusto. Crime always attracts; did not De Quincy win his reputation by discussing murder as one of the fine arts? I confess that *I* never could understand that ghastly drollery. But in the papers of the working-men one sees questions learnedly and feelingly discussed, and with great calmness; and let us say that the papers that they buy are not always those that they would choose. When proprietors of papers will be bold enough to give the word not to write down to your readers' prejudices, and to try to elevate them by bold and manly thought, expressed in plain language, we shall see a great difference. I fancy, too, if we were behind scenes,

that we should find the low influences considerably less powerful with the poor than we imagine. The papers we all most object to have a small and feeble circulation, or would have, were it not for their advertisements. There is one paper in London which is filled full of nothing but advertisements, and which is bought by those who are starving, in want, or out of situations, in the hungry hope of getting employment. A man who is at that level will regard our abstract politics as mere nonsense, and think of the selfish struggle for place between the parties, in a considerably cleaner cut and sharper view of things than you or I should."

"Indeed! indeed!" said old Mr. Corner; "now I have never seen that paper."

"The poor," continued George, "are not all bad, and, to say truth, are a great deal better than we are. They have, to be sure, two of the greatest purifiers in life—two of which we are, however, heartily ashamed."

"And what are they, sir?" said the last speaker.

"Poverty, and a low estate," said George; "and I have yet to learn that low living ever was divorced from high thinking. Rather, I should say, judging from history, it was its invariable concomitant. The superfine people always try to make it out otherwise; but what will they not do? I was amused the other day at an account of the learned doings of a great Roman bishop, who surely must have wanted some of the wisdom of his church, and have taken to that of the world. By genealogical and rabbinical research—whatever that may mean—said the paragraph, the good bishop had succeeded in making out that Saint Joseph was not a poor

carpenter, but that he was a superior sort of decorative upholsterer; so that our Blessed Lord had not the shame of being born in the house of a poor workman, but was the son of a highly respectable West-end tradesman."

"How shocking!" cried one or two of the party.

"Ah! there you feel it," said George, "when I put it roughly; but in another way, I am afraid respectable Mrs. Grundy often does just the same as the bishop. However, to our Newsvendor's Window. There you see periodicals which have been favourites with the public for twenty years, and which have always carried their light and cheerfulness into the middle-class home; there you see the quarto Bible, there Foxe's Martyrs, there the serious, and there the comic magazine, there books of etiquette and complete letter-writers, there Newgate romances, and atop of them—I wish they could press them down, they are heavy enough—the godly and too often stupid tract. In short, you see the whole workings of the wonderful British press, and upon the whole, a wonderful thing it is. What vigour, what thought, what folly, what platitudes! Well, let us tell the truth. There is plenty to be ashamed of in it, but much to be proud of. We have not quite got to perfection, though some would persuade us that we have. We shall go on improving. There is plenty of room for it; but if the press has some vivacious vices, it has again, to adopt the alliterative, some vigorous virtues; and to close the subject, as the Easterns shut a well with a stone, what should we do without it? Therefore, *Plaudite Cives.* Jump up, little boys, and clap your hands for the best press in the world, bar none, the British Press, and with all its faults, say to it, *Esto perpetua.*"

# THE PARLOUR WINDOW.

DAYS, and weeks, and months, some eighteen months thrice told, have gone by since the little society the reader has been made acquainted with in this book met for the last time. Scumble —Mr. Cimabue Scumble—has made many advances, and is even now an Associate of the Royal Academy. Mr. Corner has had his ambition realised by becoming, in his old age, a contributor to more than one vigorous new Magazine. I say new, because all Magazines are much more "vigorous" when mere infants, and create, like other children, a great row and turmoil at the beginning of their existence, which—the noise as well as the existence—seems to subside rapidly, and to die down to nothing, before the Magazine is six months old.

Some men—happy are they, and blessed all their days—seem to exist with a perpetually fresh belief in life, and to have as much faith in mankind when they are leaving the world as others have when they are entering it. This dear old gentleman was one of them. He persisted in treating George Carew as his literary godfather, and in believing that

author to be one of the most important personages in England. By the same process of illusory belief our old friend believed that he too was making quite a name in the world of letters.

"I have been looking over the names of the visitors to Cambridge House," he would say, "or the Lord Mayor's grand party to all the celebrities, and I did not see your name there, Mr. Carew; I assure you I was quite disappointed. I came up to see if you were ill."

Sly old gentleman! was there not a MS. peeping out of the corner of your pocket?

George tossed back his thick long hair, which by this time was a little grizzled, and grinned with some bitterness.

"My dear Mr. Corner," he said, "we do not live in France, or we might now and then be allowed to show our noses in society. Do you really believe that an author is honoured in England by those whom it is the fashion to call 'Society?' Do you think that he is reckoned much higher than a tumbler or an opera singer? The lamented Mr. Rarey, the horse-tamer, was a thousand times more invited out and honoured by the aristocracy than the Reverend Mr. ——, the moral essayist. One taught them to tame their horses, and was useful: they could comprehend him when taught by example; the other teaches them how to be wise, and to control their passions, which is precisely what they don't care about doing."

"Really you are very bitter."

"Not at all; I am merely speaking the truth, which is, or ought to be, always sweet."

"But surely, Mr. Carew, if we are to take the novels of

Bulwer and Disraeli as sketches from life, we must believe in rapid triumphs and glorious successes in literary côteries, where all the rank and fashion meet, in the applause and wonder of the great. Look, for instance, at Byron."

"Ay," said George, bitterly, "the applause and wonder of one season, and the scorn of the next. The English nobility —not a bad class if it knew how to play its own game—was wonder-struck at the fact of Byron. A real genius had been born with the frayed purple of an English barony about him, and clever people are rare amongst them. As for the others, there used to be an assemblage of notorieties at the house of a brilliant lady, who, like a tawny diamond, shone with a tarnished and darkened lustre, and these young fellows, with the exaggeration of youth, made out that the greatest in the world went there. But my experience is different. The treatment of literary men by this court and country is a shame and a wonder. It is true that George III. talked for five minutes with Dr. Johnson, and that George IV. patronised Captain Morris and Tom Moore, who wrote amatory songs for his kingship. Now, so far as I know, no one takes notice of us. A good thing for us, look you, as people work much more freely and honestly;—but not for the country."

"Why," gasped our old friend, "do you mean to say that no one has done you the honour to invite you—you, who wrote that splendid article on the Targum in the Bi-monthly; that article which has done more to rivet the faith of the nation and to support the Church than anything for years; that article which sent the Review into six editions, and has been translated into three modern languages in two months. Did no one notice it?"

"Yes, Miss Binks wrote for my autograph, and an enterprising photographer took my portrait, but he finds it won't sell, my boy; the straddling pictures of Mademoiselle Demi-nude, and the wide-eyed effigies of Miss Leery of the Theatres Royal, quite banish mine. No, Mr. Corner, I am sorry to tell you and our friend Felix—I hear his knock—that if you think of making anything out of literature but a very hard living, you are mistaken."

Here Felix entered, looking somewhat older, but more manly, and as bright-eyed, hopeful, and jolly as ever. "It does one good to see the young 'un," said George, as he shook hands with him. He went on with his conversation. "I was telling our friend, young Corner here, not to expect more from literature than it will realise. It is its own great reward this love of letters, and that reward alone can we count on as certain. It is easy of access, and the suddenness of triumph, the applausive breath of a few newspapers, is taken as the voice of fame.

> '—————- palmaque nobilis
> Terrarum Dominos evehit et Deos.'

But when a man has been a few years an author, he finds that he is no nearer the goal than he was when he commenced. The barrister who has won a known case gets briefs in plenty; the painter who has exhibited a good picture has heaps of commissions, and an increased price; the clergyman is moved from benefice to benefice; it is only the author who fills just the same space as before, and is paid at just so many pounds per sheet. The old age of some of

these excellent literary workmen, who have not been able, by a sensational novel or other fluke, to get ahead of the ruck, is mournful to contemplate."

"Exactly," said Felix; "therefore we will not look at it. Come, George, your name is worth something; at any rate, your good word is. Here is Southwood's letter; he is delighted to oblige you, and to secure me for a contributor. Fancy that."

"Yes, and thank your stars, too, that you still hold your Government appointment in the Tin-tax Office; or is it the Taper and Sealing-wax? I forget which."

"And what do you think the paper is about?" asked Felix, bringing it out. "Why, of course you won't guess; it is one of our old Windows. I have given a sketch of home, and the bairns and Lotty, and myself, written quite in a sage and weary style, as if I were George Carew."

"Cut along, young one," said the author; "it does well now and then to assume the mentor; but above all, you are right to let us know what you yourself have seen. 'After all,' wrote the most scholarly writer of this century, 'what you have seen for yourself is the best worth telling about.' I don't say that the phrase is peculiarly classical, but it is true. Read the paper, and let us drink success to the new venture.' Without further parley, Felix sat down and read as follows:—

"I am tired of books and of reading; type has no charms in my eyes; many volumes are a weariness to the flesh; read, read, read,—ah, me! Old Michel de Montaigne was right, when, among vows of abstinence, he also placed abstinence

from *knowledge.* 'I have sometimes,' says that wise man, 'taken a pleasure in seeing those who, from devotion, have made a vow to be *ignorant* as well as chaste, poor, and penitent; for by that vow we chastise a disordered appetite, and by restraining a greediness which pricks us on to continual book-reading, depriving the soul of a voluptuous conceit, which flatters us under the guise of knowledge; by doing thus we richly fulfil the vow of poverty, since we join to it that of humility of mind.'

"Ah! true indeed, old thinker! We studious book-men rail at the man who heaps up riches, and yet ourselves we strive to pile up a quantity of vain knowledge; there is a greediness of learning as well as a greediness of gold, '*ut omnium rerum sic literarum quoque intemperantiâ laboramur.*'* Yes, *we* revel in intemperance, we do not give ourselves time to think; in learning also, after a certain time in life, a total abstinence vow should be taken, a Maine Law, a teetotal despotism, might be passed and organised.

"So, good-bye books for to-night. Here is my wife looking daggers at me because I will not talk to her; there is Dick wanting to show me a wonderful machine made of three pieces of firewood, an old pill-box, a wheel from the bottom of a wooden horse, a cotton reel, and some twine. Dick is always making those machines, of a most useless and absurd character, but yet he is pleased and busy; he proposes to fill the pill-box with water for some impossible project, which will end in soaking his pinafore. Happy Dick! there are some

* Seneca: Epist. 106 in finem. Quoted also by Montaigne.

machinists in the big world, not yet opened to you, whose projections are quite as absurd!

"I turn away from Dick, however, to little Toddlekens, who has been, with a face as grave as that of the Lady Mayoress at a ministerial feast, receiving company for this half hour. Little Toddlekens is just five years old. In another week, to use the phrase of my friend the groom, she will be 'rising six.' She is bright-eyed, with a fair face, and such a white and red skin as no lady in the land—not even Phillis at eighteen—can boast. It *is* a pleasure to kiss her. Being a married man, I cannot say that it would be so to kiss Phillis, although some young bucks would be ready to jump out of their skin to do so. *I* had rather kiss Toddlekens. She is so pretty. Like Fielding's 'Amelia,' she has the prettiest nose in the world, but, unlike that heroine, she has not yet broken it. She has a little mouth and lips, that would beat those of Phillis by an inch; clear open eyes, so deep and innocent, that I sometimes look abashed before them, and a complexion which would send Rowland into hysterics, and make Gowland drown himself in his own lotion to accomplish. Such is Toddlekens.

"She is receiving company. The latter consists of a very wooden Dutch doll, a waxen-faced ditto; Mr. Noah (of the Ark), an elephant who has left his trunk behind him; a papier-maché donkey, who in his youth used to wag what he has lost—his head—and a miserable kitten, which has not spirit to run away. The 'company' sit round Toddlekens and her tea-tray, and she now pours out a curious mixture of weak tea, milk, and dirt. Her tea-service is of wood, and the tea-pot, I must confess, hath not a practicable spout; but what of

that? The Dutch doll, an ugly brute, with a face as flat as that of a clock, without a nose, and with no hair on its head, is the favourite. Why it is so, *I* do not know. *I* hate it myself. It nearly threw me down stairs once. It is not half so handsome as the waxy doll, nor, on the whole, so lively as Noah; nor so curious as the elephant; and yet she loves it. She bows down to it, and worships it, and sets it in the place of honour, gives it the best things—it has the coffee-pot with a wooden spout to drink tea from—and favours it in a thousand odd ways, a stupid wooden thing! Why does she do so? But, ah me! why do I and you, reader, bow down to our Dutch dolls? We have some very wooden ones in the great world, and give them more valuable things than toy coffee-pots to play with.

"There is one thing about this young lady's method of treating her company which is certainly curious. She drinks her own tea (try our curious mixture, only 2*s.* 6*d.* per lb.), and then absorbs that of her guests; none of them object to this proceeding; the kitten looks sulky certainly, and Mr. Noah, who lies in a helpless state of inanity, not intoxication, looks up, I fancy, indignantly. There, now: she has emptied the coffee-pot. Hallo! now the tea-pot is no longer full: bless the child, she will hurt herself.

"She turns from her company at my voice. Mr. Noah, &c. ('et settler, et settler,' as Yellowplush writes), are dismissed, and little Toddlekens runs to me. She kindly makes me lift her to my knee, and then hugs me. She damages my allround collar prodigiously, and ruins my shirt front; but what of that? they cost but fivepence washing, and her kisses

are worth a shilling. She proposes—now what does she propose?

"Firstly, that I should kill her, and secondly, cut her up.

"Mr. Greenacre did *that* with Mrs. Brown. Nevertheless, brute that I am, I gladly consent. I premise, however, that there is a tacit understanding that she is to represent a sheep, and that I am, after doing the cutting up business, to sell her shoulders and legs to her mother and to Dick—who looks up from his machine with a contemptuous expression—at a very high rate indeed. I begin butchering. I lay Toddlekens across my knee, drive my extended finger into her neek, hold her up to bleed, cut her up and dispose of the proceeds at most exorbitant charges, in the market not quoted in the *Times* newspaper. The great wonder is that the sheep *will* come to life again; and after killing it ten times I am tired out.

"She will be a hare now. Obeying this decision of hers, which is conveyed to me in a very petulant manner, I proceed to hunt about for Toddlekens, who is perfectly visible in the corner of the room; for here, also, the axiom of 'first catch your hare' exists in full force. Having started my game, I cock my little finger, and discharge a quantity of No. 18 and patent gunpowder from my closed fist; the hare falls, and, need I say, that the cutting up process *à la mouton* immediately commences? In fact, the whole hare business is a swindle on the part of Toddlekens, who thus beguiles me into the violent exercise she so much likes.

"As it appears perfectly certain that, having commenced this kind of business, I am 'in for it' for some considerable

period, I do not object to carry her to market, and to sell her like Uncle Tom. Shouldering my slave, therefore—for, by the way, in the little world of which I am writing I find a great deal of unnecessary labour is gone through—I travel into a vast and far country, the inhabitants whereof are represented by Dick and my wife.

"It may be South Carolina, or Virginia, or again, it may be Peru, or that great South American Empire which distinguishes itself by its adherence to the slave trade. My own ideas, from a casual knowledge of the inhabitants, lead me to suppose that it is China; the female portion of the community being actively engaged in the tea trade, and the male, Mr. Dick, being occupied on a curious invention of a water-wheel and pill-box apparatus. The Chinese, if we believe the earlier Penny Magazines, always were dabs at water-wheels; hence it must be China. I find a difficulty in disposing of my slave. The male Chinese looks with great contempt upon her; but the female, on the contrary, kisses and embraces her, and then, with strange inconsistency, offers the ridiculously small sum of twopence. I am about to drive a better bargain, when the slave asserts her freedom, and proposes a game at cards.

"No, not ombre, loo, cribbage, nor vingt-et-un, nor whist, long nor short; certainly not lansquenet, nor beggar my neighbour, those being classic and gentlemanly games. It has nothing to do with speculation, unless we call the building certain houses of a very insecure foundation by that name. We certainly do commence a building society. The philosopher Dick, who has soaked the bottom out of his pill-

box, is at once installed as a director. I am a kind of secretary; for in these young people I perceive a feeling of superiority to myself. They, I find, have weighed and measured me. Dick takes the lead, and Toddlekens pushes me aside.

"In such house-building as this, I—whose ideas have, perhaps, filled the heads of philosophers—find that I am awkward and of no avail; my fingers are too heavy; my ideas of architecture also cramp my fancy. Dick and Toddlekens succeed much better. A kind of Alhambra, with a court of lions and statues of great magnificence—the latter represented by Mr. Noah—is soon constructed by these youthful architects. The nameless lady, who represents Noah's wife, forms the population of this palace; but it must be confessed that one's imagination should have the vigour of that of Toddlekens to fill it out properly. For instance, I am told that there are stairs, stables, drawing-rooms, gardens, alcoves, and bowers: bedrooms for the princes, attics for their servants, and all the appurtenances of an immense dwelling-place. It must be said that the Alhambra is built somewhat after my own house in Cacklebury-square, and that the pantry is considerably larger than the drawing-room; but what of that? The imagination of Toddlekens and company—young, rude, and vigorous—fills out the thin walls, and peoples those paste-board courts, till no doubt that card-board house is, to them, as dear, perhaps dearer, than a palace to a queen.

"There is no doubt but that the profound, learned, and chaste poet, Mr. Tom Moore, when he wrote the line,

'All that's bright must fade,' &c.,

had a distinct allusion to card houses. Toddlekens hath become tired. She dissolves the building society in a peremptory manner; she discharges both secretary and manager very unceremoniously. She is disgusted, probably —I know I am—at the wicked leer of the old king of diamonds, the stolid stupidity of the king of clubs, the immodest wink of the queen of hearts, and the thoroughly hypocritical countenances of all the knaves of the pack. And so 'man delights her not, no, nor woman neither,' and knavish king, stupid wicked queen, and intolerable knave are swept away without one more thought upon them. Let them go! What would Captain Spot, Mr. Seedybuck, Lord Trickster, and other gamesters give to be able to whistle all thoughts of knave, king, queen, ace, and the trick down the wind like Toddlekens?

"Tea! so it is. Was ever such eagerness displayed for a meal, unless, indeed, by the passengers of the wreck Medusa, or by City Aldermen for turtle! Toddlekens, throned in a high chair, waits with much anxiety for her portion of the cheering draught, and the philosopher Dick, all thoughts of mechanics thrown aside, occupies himself with thick bread and butter. Averse as the larger persons naturally are to anybody (but themselves) talking during the meal, and at the risk of choking herself, the heroine of this sketch yet manages to edge in a word or two. She informs Dick, that being out to-day she saw a little girl who—but bless us, how can we follow the interminable rigmarole of Toddlekens' story? it has—Heaven forgive her—the germs of scandal in it already. It relates to a certain Fanny Fisher, *e pluribus unam*, who

had her mamma's veil on, and was not so nicely dressed as one whom you know. The natural philosopher listens with scorn in his eye, and bread and butter in his mouth. He is as eager to tell a wondrous tale as Mr. Disraeli himself. He knows something about school, and has a cut-and-dried story of certain schoolfellows, whose Christian and surnames he serves up in a hash. There are Ebenezer Golding, and John, and Tom, and Ferguson, Alexander, Jones, and Adam, and a certain boy who can't write well, and one who is absolutely more than six, and yet cannot get through the alphabet. At this flood of learning Toddlekens is as much abashed as a plain schoolman is before a flourishing university gent., with B.A. after his name; and she holds her tongue. Taking advantage of this armistice, the larger powers interfere, and tea is performed in peace.

"What does little Toddlekens do after? A wiser head than mine hath observed the ways of such people, and tells us of a certain 'four years' darling of a pigmy size' like Toddlekens, who goes through the old, old games of life:

> 'A wedding, or a festival,
> A mourning, or a funeral;
> And this hath now his heart,
> And unto this he frames his speech:
> Then will he fit his tongue
> To dialogues of business, love, or strife,
> But it will not be long
> Ere this be thrown aside,
> And with new joy and pride
> The little actor cons another part.'

"Even so they play more eagerly than we work. We get

tired as we grow older, or perhaps, like learned bees, distinguish barren flowers readily, and do not buzz so much over the honey that we gather; or perchance the honey is bitter, or we get none, but toil and build our empty cells.

"What! Why, even Toddlekens is tired now, and she runs to her big playfellow, and prefers a request that he would tell her a story. One cannot deny the small solicitrix, and see climbs upon my knee, anxious for the fiction. But first she shall name the story. I am myself, I say it modestly, a master of children's stories. I think I can beat *Jack the Giant Killer*, or *Hickathrift*, or indeed many of those time-honoured fictions. At any rate, I have a kindly audience, who prefer my inventions to those of the illustrious authors of the tales mentioned. Perhaps it is, after all, because my characters, being drawn from real life, my adventures from actual probabilities—which I humbly contend is not the case with Jack or Hickathrift—my audience recognise something in my stories which suits their case, and from 'a fellow feeling' are so 'wondrous kind;' hence I recant my heretical and conceited notions.

"Toddlekens, aided by the memory of the philosopher Dick, chooses her story deliberately. She will not have *Pell Bones*, because it consists of the history of a little boy, who, having blacked his face, is stolen by a negro melodist and cruelly used. *Pell Bones* contains pathos, and makes her sad. Nor will she embrace the natural philosopher's suggestion, and listen to the adventures of *Rantipoll Jones*, a young lady who, with certain herrings (her purchase), escaped from a wolf; nor of *The Bright Penny-piece;* nay, nor of

*Meddling Margery;* but after due care in so weighty a suit, she selects the adventures of *Tom Drum.* Now Tom Drum's is a long story. Having been presented with a military and musical (?) instrument bearing his own name, he behaves selfishly in insisting upon letting no one but himself play it, and goes through a variety of adventures which bring about his punishment. Thus it is I preserve poetic justice, and whilst pointing Tom Drum's moral, take care also to adorn his tale. Although little Toddlekens and the philosopher have heard this tale so often, that they can, and do, prompt me in every part, and are as anxious as a Punch and Judy audience that none of the usual *dramatis personæ* shall be omitted, yet they wish it to be told 'all over again.' Oh, blessed freshness of young mental digestions! Oh, that I too had a Tom Drum story which I could read and re-read. I confess that many masterpieces, once eagerly perused, have now a soporific effect upon me. I tried indeed but the other day to re-read the virtuous *Pamela*, but I slept instead; so it is with Bore's novels and Jawaway's divinity. There are one or two books ever new: and ONE, reader, which, if we strive to be as little children, we shall never lose our taste for.

"But Toddlekens' mother intimates that it is time for bed, and after as tender a leave-taking as such an awful separation requires, the young lady and gentleman are removed; Mary Anne is the inexorable Fate which bears them off; they are as unwilling to lay down toy and story and to go to bed, as we are to leave property and ambition and go to sleep. The mother, to soothe this separation, and to see her treasures

where they should be, departs with them, and in a short time I can hear, through the half-opened door, that prayer which becomes the child's lips, as well as graces the tongue of the philosopher; and then, 'God bless papa and mamma, and make us a good girl and boy.' Amen to that indeed, amen. A moment more, and Toddlekens is asleep.

"With one thumb—let me confess, an infantine weakness —in her mouth, and the other stretched with a natural abandonment which after-life yields not, on the coverlet, she is asleep in her crib, perhaps to dream of Tom Drum, perhaps of the hideous-faced Dutch doll. So let her lie. After time not uselessly spent let me return again, and now unweariedly, to books. I may see with a brightened mind some new idea in Plato, or I may perceive a latent meaning which I missed before, taught by some hint gathered from a little child. Who knows? The mind, indeed, is fresher from its rest, and I again go on spinning the cocoon which must exhaust the grub at last, whilst Toddlekens and the philosopher—fast asleep—hasten as quickly as their rapid pulse-beats can bear them to that time when they shall look down upon things as small as they are now, and, perhaps, shall meditate as I do."

Is it pleasant to take leave of old companions? Romantic people say that it is not. Does the reader throw aside the book with a sigh, or does he rejoice that it is out of his hands? George Carew, still lonely in his widowhood, ponders, and writes, and talks as before, half cynically, half humorously, but not without a regret that the summer has

set in with its usual severity, and that the winter is yet far off, with its cosy evenings, when friends, old and new, and the casual dropper-in come together to talk, and tell stories in the firelight. His name is well known where English iterature is honoured. He is a successful author, as times go; that is, he earns a hundred times less, and fills a ten times lower position in society than does a successful and aldermanic cheesemonger or wood-merchant; but then, as he influences in his quiet, wholesome way the thoughts of millions, he is content. He will never, probably, earn enough money to retire with a parsimonious, not to say a modest competence, but will quietly drop at his anonymous work when his busy brain is tired out, and his wearied heart is still.

Felix, ever really grateful to his first champion, is the father of some children and some books. He is most proud of the children, and as he walks with Lotty and the young ones on the cool sea-shore sand together, listening to the ceaseless roar and tumbling of the surf-crowned wave, he passes his arm round his wife's waist, and in silent thankfulness vows that he would not change his humble happiness for the most brilliant crown of fame, no, not for the delight which he and she envy, which other authors would experience, if—but of course such a thing is an impossibility—it were announced that the clever novelist and pleasant essayist Mr. F—x S-t-w-y-s were asked to dine with her Majesty the Q——n.

Old Mr. Corner supplies stories to the Magazines, full of a sweetness and simplicity that are his most eminent

characteristics, while his son, Dr. Julius, happy in his home, and standing well with the world, may truly be considered a prosperous man.

The "young man of the period," Mr. Stanton, has absolutely confided to Felix his intention of marrying—"that is, you know, Straightways, as soon as I can find a girl to my mind." The sooner the better; and may all, as they descend the slippery mount of time to that valley which soon or late we all must reach, like Antœus, rise stronger for the falls and tumbles they meet with, and be happier that the sorrow of tens of thousands casts nothing more than its softening shadow over their hearths and homes.

Mr. Cimabue Scumble is painting for the Royal Academy that picture which will win him the diploma of R.A. Cheered by the love of his wife and the enthusiasm of his friends, he walks on through life endued with the perpetual youth of artists; he works as thoroughly as ever, better than ever, and with greater love for art. Bitten with the madness of our modern artists, who earn money easily and spend it in a wild way, he has lately built a vast hall of a studio, with an open timber roof; a tower at the end, leading to dwelling rooms at the back, gives it the appearance of a church, and it is said that many semi-rustic couples come there to apply for a parson or parson's clerk to talk over the preliminaries of marriage. Round an antique fire-place at one end, in the midst of armour, lay figures, Spanish sombreros, Mexican saddles, crockery of mediæval shape, and bits of colour, bought or accepted from other artists, sit Cimabue and his friends; while, in the distance, free from the smoke of pipes,

which ascends to the roof and stains the rafters, Mrs. Scumble and the boys and girls play or work, making excursions to the artist's quarter to join in an argument or listen to a song; and on Sunday evenings, and on those of the great feasts of the Church, these songs are hymns of ancient, or, it may be, of modern, date, and the notes of an organ weep and wail in sorrow, or are jubilant with joy, as the pure hearts of the Painter and his companions lift themselves up to harmony with the great Heart of the World. So let the curtain fall upon our friends.

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